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The Question of

UNITY

**BETWEEN THE WORKERS PARTY AND
THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY**

By

ALBERT GOLDMAN

Introduction by
MAX SHACHTMAN

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Introduction

The pamphlet by Albert Goldman is more than valuable for a study and understanding of the relationship between the Workers Party and the Socialist Workers Party—it is indispensable.

A series of remarkable historical circumstances, in cruel combination, has reduced the revolutionary Marxian movement to a comparatively small organization. In the United States this movement is furthermore divided into two contending parties, the Workers Party and the Socialist Workers Party, both of which claim firm adherence to the principles of Marxism and to the Fourth International. It would be idle to deny that this division, precipitated at the outbreak of the Second World War, makes the growth of the revolutionary movement harder in this country.

The militant worker who has reached the point of understanding the need of conscious political organization, sees before him three main movements that speak in the name of socialism.

One is the Socialist party or reformist grouping similar to it. The utter helplessness and futility of the social-democratic movement in the deepening crisis of capitalism, and its foredoomed efforts to move toward socialism or even to preserve capitalist democracy by the method of class collaboration, repel thousands who seek an effective socialist solution of the crisis.

Many thousands more are even more violently repelled by the official Communist, that is, the Stalinist party. They have begun to understand that Stalinism has nothing whatsoever in common with socialism or the interests of the working class, that it is an instrument for perpetuating the totalitarian police state in Russia, and that it aims to establish a similar state for a small reactionary bureaucracy in every country of the world.

Many militants who, for these reasons, are attracted to the Trotskyist movement, which embodies the authentic ideas of socialist freedom, are puzzled and even disheartened by the existence of two Trotskyist organizations in the United States which, at least at first glance, seems to represent an unjustified division. There can be no doubt about it: just as the split in the Trotskyist movement reduces to a considerable extent the possibilities of the growth of this movement—and these possibilities are now very great and encouraging—so the overcoming of this division by a sound union of the two parties would greatly increase the possibilities of growth and would within a very short period of time

make the united Trotskyist movement a significant force in the working class and the political life of the country.

The reasons for the split in the Trotskyist movement have been set forth on numerous occasions in the press of the Workers Party. They are summarized again in the Open Letter sent by the Workers Party to the 1946 convention of the Socialist Workers Party (*Labor Action*, November 11, 1946). The interested reader is referred to this material. What the present pamphlet deals with are the efforts made by the Workers Party and the Minority in the Socialist Workers Party that was led by Albert Goldman, to heal this split by uniting the two parties.

The views of those who have fought for unity in the past two years are adequately set forth by Goldman. Although they are presented primarily from the standpoint of the comrades of the Socialist Workers Party Minority, who are now a welcome, valuable and significant addition to our organization, we of the Workers Party are able to concur vigorously with the views of the author. As an appendix, we have included all the important documents related to the unity question. Taken together, what is presented to the reader in this pamphlet is all that is needed to fix the responsibility for the division of the Trotskyist movement in the United States where it properly belongs, solely and exclusively upon the leadership of the Socialist Workers Party.

What tied us of the Workers Party to the Socialist Workers Party Minority from the very beginning, and regardless of big and little political differences, was our common conception of the kind of party that the revolutionary Marxists all over the world must build. We were and are united in the belief that only such a party can successfully lead the working class in the fight to establish socialist freedom as stands firmly on the fundamentals of revolutionary Marxism without ossifying its mind and body by blind and unreasoning faith in dogma; as considers the struggle for socialism not an intellectual exercise or a subject for endless thumb-twiddling debate but a war against capitalist tyranny so earnest and deeply urgent as to make united discipline in action an iron tenet of its life; as is so founded, organized and conducted that it not only "allows" but systematically maintains and encourages the richest possible intellectual life in its own ranks, the freest exchange of opinion, the widest range of criticism, the strictest observance of the principles of workers' democracy. In a word, a party such as Lenin and his comrades sought to build and maintain, and which Stalin and his camarilla succeeded in destroying as the indispensable pre-condition to the destruction of the Russian Socialist revolution.

What united us with the Minority of the Socialist Workers Party and finally brought its best militants together with us into one party, is precisely what divided us from the leadership of the Socialist Workers Party, the Cannonites, and finally proved to be the principal obstacle to unity.

The whole history of the Trotskyist movement, from the launching of Trotsky's struggle against the Russian bureaucracy in 1923, is in large part the history of our struggle against the ossification that preceded the shattering of the revolutionary party in Russia. That ossification was carried on in the name of "monolithism." It was aimed to destroy the revolutionary heart and mind of the party and thereby destroy every trace of workers' democracy and socialism. It could not and did not have any other purpose. Monolithism, "a party hewn of one block," was the poison introduced into the communist movement by the late Zinoviev, a revolutionist who had known better times—and better ideas. Under the guise of making the party firm and hard, it squeezed out of the party all that was revolutionary and life-giving. Under guise of preventing the revolutionary party from "degenerating into a sterile debating society," it succeeded in wiping out all debate, all discussion, all thought, everything except blind and servile obedience to a bureaucratic autocracy. Under guise of protecting the party from a "petty-bourgeois revision of Leninism," it ended by destroying everything Lenin stood for and fought for—everything. Zinoviev's "monolithism" was carried to its murderous conclusion by Stalinism. Anyone who does not understand this, who does not draw the lessons from it, who does not bend over backwards to prevent its recurrence on no matter how small a scale, may have the best intentions and desires in the world but he will never help build up a genuine revolutionary movement capable of laying the foundations for socialist democracy.

To read the record of the Cannonites in the course of the struggle for unity, to read their documents, to examine their practices, is to see plainly that in their adoption and application of the concept of a "monolithic" party they have not only abandoned the traditions and struggle of Trotskyism in this field, but have passed beyond Zinoviev to a stage somewhere between the beginning of the Zinovievist "Bolshevization" and the beginning of the Stalinist "Bolshevization."

"It seems," wrote Frederick Engels to the German socialist, Eduard Bernstein, on October 20, 1882, "that *every* workers' party of a big country can develop only in the course of internal struggle, this being grounded in the dialectical laws of development in general."

That is our view to the letter. In the Socialist Workers Party today that view is anathema—rejected, sneered at, punished by disciplinary measures up to and including expulsion from the ranks. We regard discussion of all questions, free criticism, debate of all the problems of the working class movement, an indispensable and inseparable part of the very life of a revolutionary party. Without it a party cannot even live, let alone develop and grow powerful. And we mean not a discussion that is always confined within the four walls of the party, but a discussion before

the eyes of the working-class public as well. Only thus can members see how the revolutionary vanguard, which seeks their support, arrives at its ideas, why it persists in its ideas or why, in the contrary case, it modifies its ideas. That is how Marx and Engels and Lenin and Trotsky and Luxemburg and Liebknecht and all the other true architects of the working-class movement *always* proceeded. Anything short of that is tantamount to the concept that the ideas of the revolutionary party, the way it works them out, the way it develops them, and the way it alters them, are the private affair of the party itself and do not concern the working class whose role is merely that of the passive recipient of programs "finished" inside of locked party laboratories, which usually comes to mean the double-locked laboratories of an uncontrolled supreme clique in the party.

The Cannonites regard discussion as an irritating imposition by people who are irresponsible by definition. They have made the unique contribution to the movement of opening the party press to discussion—if it is opened at all—only after the party has officially adopted a position. That is, you may argue only under conditions which guarantee the ineffectuality of your argument. The Cannonites regard discussion not as a paramount necessity for a living movement but as a "luxury"! This term, which tells us everything we need to know about those who use it, may be found repeatedly in the polemics directed by the Cannonites against us in the past and more recently against the Socialist Workers Party Minority. The same term, used in the same context, in the same way, and repeated no less often, may be found in the early literary assaults of the Russian bureaucracy against the Trotskyist opposition. The Cannonites did not invent their gunpowder.

It is this difference over the concept of the party that exploded the joint attempt of the Workers Party and the Socialist Workers Party Minority to achieve unity with the Cannonites. We for our part were ready to make every conceivable concession. But we made clear from the very beginning that we would not and could not give up our concept of a living, democratic, revolutionary socialist organization. The prospect of having in the united party a large group of trained, educated and devoted revolutionists, with views of their own and both the ability and intention to defend them, was too much for the Cannonites. A life of bureaucratic serenity, in which all votes are cast like one, is much more to their taste. Everything else that divided the two parties was unimportant in comparison with the difference on the kind of party that is needed.

As a result, after a number of transparently shabby maneuvers and cynically self-contradictory positions taken on the question of unity, the Chicago convention of the Socialist Workers Party this November rejected unity with the Workers Party, without any discussion whatsoever, and with a virtually unanimous

vote that was as gratifying to the leadership as it was discreditable to the party itself. To make sure that the virtual unanimity would be transformed as quickly as possible into a total unanimity, the two leaders of the remnants of the Minority group, which did not follow the comrades around Goldman into the Workers Party, were unceremoniously expelled from the party. After several days of pseudo-debate, in which the Minority leaders were denounced in the most violent, rude and disloyal way as "revisionists" and "enemies" of Marxism on one theoretical and political question after another, they were expelled at the very end of the convention for...breach of discipline! Here too the petty bureaucrats only borrowed their gunpowder from the big bureaucrats whom they so sedulously, if unconsciously, ape.

The theoretical and political differences between the Workers Party and the Socialist Workers Party did not, in our opinion, play the decisive role in the rejection of unity by the Cannonites. But this does not mean that it played no role at all or that it will not play an even greater role in time to come.

Bureaucratism is not always merely a system or means of imposing a false policy upon a movement. Bureaucratism has roots of its own, too. Often it is precisely a bureaucratized movement with a bureaucratic leadership that makes it difficult or impossible to have a correct policy adopted when it is proposed by critics of the leadership, or to alter a policy which requires alteration. A bureaucracy always seeks "peace" and "order" in its organization. It is always sufficiently content with the policy, program and theories that prevail, unless and until it and it alone decides that they require modification. It is concerned beyond measure with its prestige and authority, with maintaining and saving face. It is resentful of initiative taken by others which reflects upon its own failure to take initiative. Rather than credit opponents and critics by accepting their policies, it will seek to discredit these critics by persisting in outlived or false policies about which it itself no longer has firm convictions. If not at every given moment then certainly in the long run, bureaucratism and false policy go hand in hand, they rise—or sink—to each other's level, they are the necessary complement of each other. Then, what began or seemed to begin as a dispute over "organizational" questions clearly becomes a dispute over political questions which puts the organizational difference into the shade. In this sense, one of the criminal evils inherent in an ossified bureaucracy, concerned first and foremost with perpetuating itself and maintaining its prestige and authority, with justifying itself under all circumstances, is its inexorable tendency to convert every normal and small difference of opinion into a violent factional clash, to exaggerate differences, to stimulate, maintain and deepen differences artificially, to prevent normal, simple and easy correction of the course of a party when it needs correction, to drive young and unskilled critics to desperation, to exaggera-

tions of their own, and sometimes even to irresponsible actions which hurt and discredit the opposition, hurt the party and only make the consolidation and self-justification of the bureaucracy easier.

In the very early days of the struggle between the opposition and the bureaucracy in Russia (Trotsky points out), the party leadership, in order artificially to deepen and extend the differences, dug into the historical past of the Russian movement for all sorts of half-relevant and utterly irrelevant arguments. To clothe themselves with the authority of Lenin in the struggle against Trotsky, the bureaucracy, in part out of deliberate disloyalty, in part out of simple lack of understanding of Lenin's views, raised for the first time the theory of "socialism in a single country." It is perfectly clear that this theory was put forward in the first place solely as a disloyal factional weapon against the opposition. But what was initially invented as an instrument of the bureaucracy eventually transformed the bureaucracy into its instrument, so to speak. The bureaucracy became victim of its own factional excesses. The bureaucracy sought artfully to deepen the gulf between itself and the opposition and ended by falling into the gulf itself. The theory of "socialism in a single country" became practice. In practice, a more natural realignment took place. On the one side, at one stage or another, stood those who sought to preserve the achievements of the socialist revolution. To the other side, were driven all those whom powerful social forces, making this theory their very own, propelled toward the destruction of the achievements of the socialist revolution. Stalin, and the circle around him in 1924, thought that putting forward the theory of "Socialism in a single country" would be an effective factional bludgeon with which to smash Trotsky. It is inconceivable, however, that in 1924 this circle could even dream of the distance from socialism, that they were destined to travel under the impulsion of the theory they had themselves invented and of the social forces awakened and mobilized by this theory.

In the long run, organization, any system of organization or administration, does not have and cannot have any independent significance. Politics exists to serve class interests. Organizations exist to serve politics. Organization of a certain type is required for politics of a certain type. If it does not meet these requirements, one or the other must, and in the end surely will, be "adjusted" so that the two conform. In the end, the political line decides everything.

The possibility of unity between the Workers Party and the Socialist Workers Party was reopened for the first time since the beginning of the Second World War, at least so far as the Workers Party was concerned, by the official decision of the Socialist Workers Party that the slogan of "unconditional defense of the Soviet Union" was to be taken from the foreground

position which it occupied in the SWP's political life and retired to the background; that it would be replaced by the slogan "Defend the European revolution from Stalinism." The principal political difference that caused the split in 1940 having been the question of defense of Stalinist Russia in the war, the Socialist Workers Party Minority and then the Workers Party itself took the view that with this change in the position of the SWP, unity was once more desirable and possible. It is not necessary to dwell on this. The conclusion is obvious and incontestable.

But it is precisely at this point that the bureaucratic character of the régime and leadership in the Socialist Workers Party played its fatal part. To prevent unity, to show that unity was "politically" impossible or undesirable, the Socialist Workers Party bureaucracy had to exaggerate and extend and even invent political differences. That is the only meaning of the classic bureaucratic formula, not coined but adopted by the leader of the Socialist Workers Party: "We, on our part, assume that the course toward deepening the split is necessary and correct; our attitude flows from that." It is simply impossible to so much as begin to understand what happened to the struggle for unity if the full meaning of this formula, first uttered in April 1945 (see Appendix), is not grasped in all its implications. To avoid unity, the Cannonites took the course of "deepening the split."

The slogan of "defense of the Soviet Union," which they had at first decided had "receded into the background," was forcibly dragged into the foreground, given the same, if not greater, prominence and emphasis than it had before. Typical of the bureaucratic procedure, the second change was made without even so much as an acknowledgment of the first and, it goes without saying, without consulting the party membership or even the official party leadership. The second change came as a purely personal pronouncement by the party leader, as a revelation from high authority, as a proclamation from the throne, in the form of a speech delivered at a public meeting in which the slogan was once more—on purely personal initiative and authority, it should be emphasized, and without the slightest consultation or authorization from the party itself—hauled into the foreground for the ingenious reason that... the Second World War is still going on. To this it should be added that the first change, namely, retiring the slogan to the background, was made while the war was really on; while the second change, namely, shifting the slogan back to the foreground, was made months after the defeat of Germany and Japan!

Since that time, the "Russian line" of the Socialist Workers Party has been "fortified" in the same direction and with the same aim of "deepening the split." But even if on a smaller scale, nevertheless in essentially the same way, that which was so cleverly contrived as a factional instrument is necessarily acquir-

ing a force and motion of its own. The tool manipulates the master more than the master manipulates the tool.

At a time when, far more than ever before, it is so clear that Stalinism exploits the shibboleth of "defense of the Soviet Union" for the purpose of justifying or covering up the most brutal and reactionary suppression not only of all the elements of the socialist revolution and the working-class movement but of whole nations and peoples, the most cynical imperialist spoliation, looting, annexation and subjugation of other lands—the Cannonites shout more loudly than ever: "Unconditional defense of the Soviet Union." At a time when it is so clear that the Stalinist régime has reached a new low point in its reactionary degeneration, so clear that its oppression and exploitation of the peoples it rules has nothing—absolutely nothing—in common with socialism or a workers' state of any kind whatsoever; when all this has become so clear that in one part of the Fourth International after another comrades are practically scrambling to get away from the strangulating and stultifying theory that Stalinist Russia is any sort of workers' state—the Cannonites feel impelled to proclaim the proletarian character of Stalinist barbarism more vociferously and more belligerently than ever before!

At the same time, the Cannonites proclaim in the statement of their Political Committee of August, 1946, that they intend to lay down as a condition for membership in the Fourth International the acceptance, among other things, of their "evaluation of the Soviet Union and attitude toward its defense." That which Trotsky himself did not consider a basis for division of the Fourth International, the question on which Trotsky considered that differences were entirely permissible within the Fourth International, the Cannonites now lay down as the "rock-bottom programmatic criteria operating today to demarcate the revolutionary tendency from all forms and varieties of opportunism." This means nothing less than the attempt to plunge a sword through the Fourth International as a whole. Blind and petty bureaucrats, they are driven by their excesses to the criminal attempt to split the International in two in order to justify their criminal opposition to unity in the United States.

It is possible to be permanently in favor of unity between two organizations, provided the situation that made the proposal for unity feasible remains permanently the same. It would be irresponsible and hypocritical on our part if we said that the situation is the same, at this writing, as it was when the Minority of the Socialist Workers Party first proposed unity and the National Committee of the Workers Party endorsed its initiative. From our point of view, the interests of the movement would be best served if the development took the direction of yesterday's situation. The Cannonites, however, by proceeding to "deepen the split," by exaggerating differences and inventing new ones, are increasingly becoming the prisoners of these differences. From

creators of these differences, they are becoming creatures of these differences. The more reactionary the evolution of Stalinism and Stalinist Russia, the more vehemently do the Cannonites proclaim themselves the "revolutionary" partisans of the Stalinist state—while we proclaim ourselves more vigorously than ever its irreconcilable enemies. The Cannonites are indeed deepening the split between us, to exactly the same extent that they are deepening the gulf between themselves and revolutionary Marxism.

We look upon the advance of Stalinism as the advance of a new barbarism. The Cannonites who hailed the advance of the Stalinist army of counter-revolution as the advance of "Trotsky's Red Army," who insisted upon the "objectively revolutionary consequences" of the triumph of the Stalinist counter-revolution during and after the war, who advised the insurrectionary Warsaw people to subordinate themselves to the Marshals of the Stalinist army—consider the existence and the victories of the Stalinist state as the existence and victories, in some way or other, of socialism itself.

The more the Cannonites drive themselves or are driven along the political road they have taken, the longer is the distance between us—the longer and the greater.

Between those who want to build a revolutionary party capable of establishing a socialist workers' democracy, and who prove it among other ways because they are rigidly devoted to democracy in their own party, and those who pass off the abomination of bureaucratic monolithism as the essence of "Bolshevism" or "Trotskyism," there cannot but be a gulf that grows harder to bridge. Between those who struggle against barbarism in the name of socialism and those who see some sort of socialism in this very barbarism, there is indeed a gulf that nothing can bridge!

The unity of the working class as a whole in the struggle against capitalism is always desirable and always necessary. The unity of revolutionary Marxists inside the working class is not less desirable and necessary. But we are not and have never been of that type to whom Frederick Engels referred contemptuously as the "unity-shouters." We were for unity with the Socialist Workers Party when, in our opinion, it was not only necessary in general but also desirable and possible. To talk about unity between the Workers Party and the Socialist Workers Party now, after all that has happened in the past two years in particular, would either be hollow ritualism or pious hypocrisy. Unity between these two parties, a real and sound and fruitful unity, is possible now only on the condition that an awakened and re-oriented membership, aided by a reoriented international movement, imposes a radical change in the reactionary pro-Stalinist "Russian line" of the Socialist Workers Party and, correspondingly, deposes the bureaucratic régime which is responsible for keeping this millstone around the neck of the Socialist Workers

Party. To talk about unity under any other circumstances is quite unreal.

To wait with folded hands until this takes place is, of course, an inexcusable absurdity. The task of every conscious revolutionary militant, worker and intellectual, is to join and build the party of revolutionary Marxism in the United States, the Workers Party. That is the great significance of the step taken by the comrades associated with Albert Goldman in the Minority of the Socialist Workers Party. They represented a tendency in the Socialist Workers Party. Despite old and to a considerable extent outlived differences, despite all sorts of disagreements on questions of tactics, even despite conflicts between us that sometimes assume very vigorous forms, this group of old and experienced, as well as of young and new, militants were drawn to the Workers Party. They joined its ranks. The shift of their party affiliation is of no small significance. In the more than six years that have passed since the split of the American Trotskyist movement, the Workers Party has seen the development in its ranks of different groups and tendencies, all of which proceeded upon the foundations and within the broad framework of revolutionary Marxist principle. This is anything but a source of regret to us. What is significant there, however, is that in spite of what have often been sharp differences in our own ranks on theoretical and political and even organizational questions, we have had no split, we have had no factional expulsions, and above all, the Cannonite party has not succeeded in attracting to its ranks a single one of the groups or tendencies that co-exist in our party.

Without immodesty or smugness, we permit ourselves to conclude that both phenomena—the attractive power in the one organization and the lack of it in the other—are a tribute to the Workers Party and to the concepts to which it holds so firmly.

MAX SHACHTMAN.

December 4, 1946.

THE QUESTION OF UNITY

By ALBERT GOLDMAN

On the surface it appears as if those of us who left the Socialist Workers Party and joined the Workers Party did so because the SWP refused to accept the proposal which the former Minority of the SWP made for unity of the two parties. If that were really the case, then what we did would be inexplicable. For within our ranks are comrades who have spent many years in the revolutionary movement and experienced revolutionary socialists do not leave a party because of a disagreement on a question that is apparently not so very important.

There can easily be an honest difference of opinion as to whether unity with a certain party or group is or is not advisable and necessary. In such a case the minority advocating unity accepts the decision of the majority and continues its efforts to win the majority to its point of view. But it was clear to us that the rejection of unity by the leaders of the SWP was not the result of an honest conviction that unity is incorrect but rather of a fear of having too many independent revolutionists within the party. The rejection of unity was to us final proof that concepts and methods of organization completely alien to Bolshevism had been introduced by Cannon and his followers and that what they want to build is a monolithic instead of a revolutionary party.

It was of course possible for us to remain in the SWP and struggle against these concepts and methods but there were too few of us and too much of our time would have been

wasted in controversies with a clique that almost invariably succeeded in dragging every intellectual conflict down to its lowest level.

We joined the Workers Party because we are of the opinion that a union of all the forces striving to build a revolutionary Marxist party—as against a monolithic party—will, in the long run, bring the best results.

Our hopes for unity are not completely destroyed and our struggle for unity is not over. If there is unity it will mean that the process of degeneration that has begun in the SWP will have been stopped. If there is no unity then there is nothing else to do except to proceed on our path of building a revolutionary Marxist party.

In 1940 a bitter factional struggle centering around the issues of the defense of the Soviet Union and the nature of the regime, led to a split. In my opinion, the comrades who split and formed the WP made a grave mistake; in their opinion they were correct. But the split is now part of history and what is necessary is to unite and not to fight over an incident of the past.

The very nature of the issues upon which the split was based should have led intelligent and experienced Marxists to expect re-unification. When informed about the split Trotsky wrote that the then Minority was determined to pass through the experience of an independent party. Such an expression indicated that he considered the split a temporary one, because he considered the issues leading to the split as issues that would be settled in a short time.

They who see in the revolutionary movement a process in which sharp intellectual conflict is inevitable and even necessary do not consider a split a crime for which one suffers eternal damnation. It is a very costly part of the life of the revolutionary movement and all efforts must be made to avoid it. But if a split does occur, revolutionists who are interested in the revolution and not in their cliques make every effort to unite the divided forces.

Personal animosities are aroused in the course of bitter factional strife. But what kind of revolutionists are they who persist in retaining these animosities regardless of the passing of time and the elimination of the issues that gave rise to the struggle? Lenin was by no means a gentle person in a factional struggle. Lenin and Trotsky fought each other fiercely. But they found no trouble in uniting when the question of the Russian Revolution, upon which they saw eye to eye, demanded unity.

Alas that so many petty people have found it easy to imitate Lenin in hurling terms of opprobrium, but have found Lenin's politics too difficult to grasp. And Lenin's politics included unifications as well as splits. And the same is true of Trotsky.

POLITICAL BASIS FOR UNITY

The mere fact that unity of the SWP and the WP would do away with tremendous duplication of effort would justify making all efforts for unity. There are now two weekly agitational organs—THE MILITANT with a circulation, let us say of 35,000, and LABOR ACTION with one of 20,000. Would not one paper sold to 50,000 workers be much more effective? And the two papers are so similar in content that the average worker cannot possibly distinguish between them. There are two theoretical monthly magazines. There is confusing duplication of effort on all fronts. Such a situation should be tolerated only if there are profound programmatic differences.

There are of course differences but they are easily compatible with membership in one party, provided there is a willingness on the part of the minority to abide by discipline in action. The most serious difference is on the question of the defense of the Soviet Union but in 1940 we of the majority of the SWP, following Trotsky, contended that there was no justification of a split because of differences on that question. If that was true in 1940, it is a thousand times more true in 1946 when the

most important question before us is not the defense of the Soviet Union but the defense of the European Revolution against Stalinism.

Other differences that developed during the period of separation are minor in comparison with the question of the defense of the Soviet Union. Under no circumstances could any one of them or all of them put together justify a split or the continuation of a split.

On the basic anti-capitalist program there are no differences; on the program of transitional demands there are practically no differences. Readers of the weekly papers of the two parties could easily see that during the war, both refused to support the war on the ground that they considered it, on the part of the United States, imperialist in character; both fought against the no-strike pledge; both supported all the strikes. At present the two parties support the struggle for higher wages; they advocate the formation of a Labor party; they demand the withdrawal of the American troops from all occupied countries; they defend the European Revolution against the Stalinists and the democratic imperialists.

On the question of the nature of a party both parties accept the principle of democratic centralism. It is true that the rejection of unity by the leaders of the Socialist Workers Party together with other indications point to a Stalinist trend on the part of the SWP leaders but they deny that; they insist that they have the true Bolshevik concept of party organization; so do the leaders of the WP. There may even be legitimate differences of opinion on the application of the principle of democratic centralism but such differences should not prevent unity.

Serious revolutionists must above all recognize that the time within which we can build a powerful revolutionary party to lead the masses to socialism is limited. The invention of the atom bomb gives us, in all probability, another post-war period and no more. The serious tasks confronting the revolutionary Marxist movement both in this country and abroad demand the strengthen-

ing of that movement through unification of the two parties that represent it.

If the political situation demands unity why is there no unity? Upon whom is the responsibility for the failure to achieve unity and what significance can be attached to the motives of those who have rejected unity?

ATTITUDE TO THE WP

There was a sharp difference of attitude between the Minority and the Majority of the SWP towards the WP, even before the question of unity arose. The difference was between honest revolutionists interested only in the welfare of the revolutionary movement and cliquists interested primarily in the strengthening of their clique.

We of the Minority proposed joint action on all questions where we had no differences with the WP. We proposed a bloc in the trade unions; we proposed joint anti-fascist activities; we proposed to avoid the obscene spectacle of having two small revolutionary groups run competing candidates in the New York elections. All this we did simply on the proposition that a difference on one issue even though it leads to a split, does not do away with the necessity of common action on issues upon which we agree. The leaders of the Majority stubbornly refused all of our proposals. The leading comrades of the WP, on the other hand, agreed with us completely and were willing to unite in any action where there was no disagreement.

The attitude of the leaders of the SWP to the WP is revealed by Cannon's expression: "*We must deepen the split.*" What can that statement possibly mean? It can mean only a conscious attempt to widen the gulf between the parties regardless of the fact that they base themselves on the same fundamental principles and have almost the same immediate demands. To deepen the split under these circumstances must mean falsification; it must mean and it did mean distorting the position of the WP on the various questions—all for the purpose of deceiving and prejudicing the member-

ship of the SWP, composed of comrades who for the most part do not read the WP press.

The comrades of the Minority read the WP press and told the truth about the contents. We had no difficulty in recognizing the obvious: that the comrades of the WP are devoted revolutionists. The leaders of the Cannon clique either read the press of the WP and distorted the contents or did not read the press. In both cases they shouted that the comrades of the WP are "renegades." Our attitude was based on the truth; the attitude of the Cannonites is based on falsehood.

THE RECORD ON UNITY

I must admit that when the Minority decided to introduce a resolution in favor of unity, the situation was not a favorable one. The SWP leaders had refused any and every kind of joint action with the WP. They were teaching the members that the WP comrades were renegades and that they should avoid fraternizing with them. On the other hand, the WP comrades were afraid of unity because they felt that unity with the Cannon clique would not be a pleasant experience. We knew that the SWP leaders would start by rejecting unity; we did not know how the WP leaders would react to our proposal for unity.

But in our opinion unity was correct and necessary and we decided to go ahead with our resolution. The violent reaction of Cannon to the resolution was a clear indication that our task would be extremely difficult if not hopeless. Never has he been so violent as when he shouted that the intention of those who introduced the resolution was to split the party. Later on he took that back but the violence of his attitude gave him away. For it disclosed that under no circumstances would he permit unity and he knew that such an attitude must necessarily lead to a split.

The Minority did not ask for immediate unity with the WP. We asked that the leading committee of the SWP go on record in favor of unity and proceed to in-

vestigate the possibilities of unity. That means a discussion with the leading comrades of the WP for the purpose of finding out whether unity is feasible. We understood that there were difficulties and that it was necessary to begin frank and honest discussions and to determine whether unity would work out in practice.

From the very beginning of our unity proposal we of the former Minority insisted that unity is not desirable if it means another violent factional struggle with another split to follow. We were not and are not afraid of any discussions but we do not want bitter factional strife.

Throughout the whole controversy we stood for the principle of joint action of the two parties on all issues upon which there was substantial agreement, for the purpose of testing out whether or not the comrades of the SWP and of the WP could live in one party even though divided by differences on various questions. We said that close collaboration would prepare the membership of both parties for unity and would eliminate the personal antagonisms remaining from the factional strife of 1940. There is nothing like joint work in a common cause to make people forget animosities.

But shouting that the WP leaders were renegades and that the split must be deepened, Cannon reacted violently against the proposal for unity. To him it means the coming into the party of several hundred revolutionists who would be persuaded only by argument, who would not listen to his banalities with awe and proclaim his anecdotes as the writings of an inspired historian. Unity would mean more independent revolutionists in the party and he had enough of us as it was.

A CHANGE OF LINE

To our request to start a discussion with the leaders of the WP to determine whether unity was feasible, Cannon answered that no discussion was necessary because the press of the WP gave us all the information that was necessary to know that its program and activities made unity undesirable.

The Minority of course did not want a discussion on program; we knew the program of the WP and that is why we were for unity; what we wanted was a discussion to see whether unity was practical.

Suddenly there was a change of line on the part of the SWP leadership. Instead of flat and open opposition to unity the formula was brought out: "*We are neither for nor against—wait and see.*" Instead of rejecting any kind of discussion because the press of the WP gave us all the information necessary, the formula was adopted: "*a thorough discussion and probing of all differences.*"

Officially the change of line was explained by the fact that the WP had sent a communication to the SWP, taking cognizance of the Minority's proposal for unity and indicating its favorable attitude to unity and willingness to discuss the question. As serious revolutionaries the WP leaders had not waited for an official invitation. They knew that the Minority had made a proposal and immediately took a position in favor of unity.

Since Cannon had previously stated that the program of the WP made unity an unrealistic proposition and since he stated that the press of the WP gave us all the information necessary, it would seem that a communication from the WP should make no difference. But it was evident that unity was a powerful issue in the ranks of the International and open opposition to it would not be a good tactic. Comrade Natalia Trotsky had already expressed herself in favor of unity. It appeared desirable to Cannon to sabotage unity rather than oppose it openly. This explains the change of line. Unfortunately the members of the SWP shifted their position in the same manner that the members of the Stalinist parties shift theirs—whenever the leaders decide that a change is necessary.

When the line was shifted from open opposition to unity to a "not for, not against, but wait and see" attitude, a committee was designated to meet with a committee of

the WP. At one of the meetings the WP comrades indicated their desire to publish a tendency organ after unity, for internal party circulation. This was immediately taken up by the SWP leaders and the party members were told that the real obstacle to unity was this demand for an independent tendency organ. Since the SWP leaders are "smart" people they did not put this down in writing but spread it throughout the party.

Thereupon the Minority addressed a communication to the WP asking the WP comrades to be satisfied with an internal party bulletin provided the right of a group to publish its own bulletin for internal party circulation be recognized by the SWP leaders. This proposition was accepted by the WP comrades but then the SWP leaders simply stated that the question of the tendency bulletin was not at all important and was not the one to prevent unity. The programmatic differences were important and these had to be discussed.

More than six months after the adoption of a resolution providing for a "thorough discussion" with the WP covering all of the differences between the parties, the Political Committee of the SWP presented the WP with a list of about fifteen questions and requested the latter to state its position on all of the enumerated questions. This apparently is to be the beginning of the "thorough discussion," although the list of questions was accompanied by a resolution which stated that on the basis of the answers to the questions the coming convention would definitely decide on the question of unification.

A DISCUSSION TO PREVENT UNITY

Several questions present themselves in connection with the list of subjects for discussion. Do not the leaders of the SWP know the position of the WP on the various questions enumerated by them for discussion? If not what kind of revolutionaries are these who pretend to lead a revolution-

any political party? If they know the position of the WP on the various subjects do they expect to hold a real discussion, in the sense of trying to persuade the WP comrades that they are wrong? And suppose they do not succeed in that task? Are they not able, as political leaders to state beforehand, on the basis of their knowledge of the WP program, whether or not the differences permit membership in one party?

And if the "discussion" is for the purpose of acquainting the SWP members with the program of the WP, how does it happen, as asked by Max Shachtman, that the members were and are all opposed to unity? Are they opposed to it because they are ignorant of the WP program?

If one considers the list of questions it becomes clear even to an inexperienced person that the "discussion" is to be held not for the purpose of arriving at an honest decision as to whether unity is possible or desirable but solely for the purpose of giving a political cover to an unpolitical rejection of unity.

I quote from a statement by the Minority, dealing with the list of questions to be discussed. "The questions listed by the PC for discussion include all subjects upon which there is or may possibly be some differences with the WP. From the point of view of a discussion on unity they are absurd; but from the point of view of confusing an inexperienced membership and killing the possibility of unity the questions listed for "discussion" were formulated by "clever" people who see in "clever" maneuvering a solution for the problem of preventing unity without giving their real reasons for opposition to unity. . . .

"Undoubtedly the dialecticians of the PC will prove that unity is impossible by citing the law of quantity changing into quality. One or two differences, we shall be told, may not be a bar to unity, but fifteen differences create a qualitative change.

"What other purpose than the one mentioned above can a list of questions have that would fight the battle

of 1940 all over again; that asks for a discussion on the methods, principles and philosophy of Marxism; that raises such a silly subject for discussion as the attitude of the WP to the Young Peoples Socialist League; that wants to discuss subjects that are part of history (India and China during the war); that wants to revive a discussion on Russia. . . .?

"Honest and serious revolutionists confronted with the question of unity with another organization would take the trouble, once the question was raised, to find out the basic program of the opponent party with which unity was proposed; would follow the agitational press of that party to see what its position is on the basic questions of the day; to decide whether the differences that exist are or are not compatible with membership in one party; they would find out whether the membership of the opponent party are willing to abide by the decisions of the majority; honest and serious revolutionists would propose a period of cooperation to decide whether unity will be followed by harmony in action. . . .

"From the point of view of unity the attitude of the Workers Party to the war waged by the United States is of infinitely greater importance than its attitude to China. But the former question is not raised in the list of questions. From the point of view of unity the position of the Workers Party on the no-strike pledge is a thousand times more important than its attitude to the YPSL but that is not mentioned in the list of questions."

If the coming convention of the SWP is not asked to decide that unity at present is not feasible because there are too many differences, it will be only because we have succeeded in exposing Cannon's petty maneuver. It is difficult, however, to find what else he can do—except to state that the Minority and the WP leaders were not honest in proposing unity and accuse those of us who are sincerely for unity of using the question of unity as a maneuver for a split.

Conscious of the dishonesty which accompanied every one of their steps connected with their maneuvers against unity,

the leaders of the Majority decided to smear the leaders of the Minority and of the WP as dishonest. They discovered that Max Shachtman had written some letters to me. One would imagine from the stir created that they found the letters in my coat pocket and not in the Bulletin of the Workers Party, a magazine for discussion of party problems available to non-party members as well as to party members. In the SWP there is published an internal party bulletin which is marked in bold letters INTERNAL, and in smaller letters "for party members only." The leaders of the WP on the other hand, very properly consider that a revolutionary party as part of the working class can have no political secrets from the working class.

In these letters, Shachtman discussed with me the policy which he thought should be followed by the Minority of the SWP. On the basis of the absolutely correct premise that Cannon would never permit unity at the present relative strength of the two parties, he urged that we leave the party because it would be far more gainful to the revolutionary movement. The letters clearly indicate that Shachtman and the other comrades of the WP were seriously and sincerely for unity but that they realized that unity was not to be achieved because of the opposition of Cannon.

With great glee Cannon and his dutiful hand-raisers pounced upon the letters; they printed them in their secret bulletin. For the first time since the split Shachtman had something published in the SWP press. The leaders of the SWP launched an attack on Goldman and Morrow as initiators of unity proposals for the purpose of creating a split. Of course Cannon could easily frustrate such a purpose by accepting unity, but that did not occur to him.

We challenge anyone to read Shachtman's letters and find a single sentence which would prove the absolutely unfounded charge that the proposal for unity was the result of a conspiracy between the Minority and WP leaders to create a split in the SWP.

Study the record made by the various groups on the ques-

tion of unity and you cannot help but conclude that the Minority and the WP sincerely accepted unity whereas the Cannonite clique, in a thoroughly dishonest manner, sabotaged unity. The record of the Cannonites is a record of petty maneuverers who fear to meet in intellectual conflict a large group of independent revolutionists. In the statement from which I already quoted we said:

"It is tragic enough to see that leaders of a revolutionary party insist on continuing a split which necessarily is detrimental to the movement."

"But what is doubly tragic is that in a movement founded by a genius who is the very incarnation of intellectual integrity, a leadership relies not on an honest presentation of a position but on petty, dishonest maneuvers calculated only to fool the membership."

"It is clear that a desire to build a monolithic party goes hand in hand with political dishonesty."

STALINIST GERMS IN THE SWP

The dishonest opposition to unity, though the most important, was not the only thing that convinced the Minority that the leadership of the SWP was turning away from a Leninist-Trotskyist conception of a revolutionary party and toward a Zinovievist conception. It was Zinoviev who introduced the idea of a monolithic party. Stalin developed that idea. In the days when Cannon was a member of the Communist Party, Cannon was an ardent defender of the monolithic party.* He is far more careful now; he does not say that

*In a speech before the New York Workers' School of the Communist Party, a speech that was printed in the **Workers Monthly** of November, 1924, Cannon had the following to say about the nature of the party:

"It (a Bolshevik party) must be a centralized party prohibiting factions, tendencies and groups. It must be a monolithic party hewn of one piece."

"What shall we say of our party if we measure it by this standard? From the very beginning and even up to the present day, our party has been plagued by factions, tendencies and groups. At least one-half of the energy of the party has been expended in factional struggles, one after another. We have even grown into the habit of accepting this state of affairs as a normal condition. We have gone to the extent of putting a pre-

he wants a monolithic party as he did in his early days, but actually he is working to create just such a party. Some of his followers substitute the word "homogeneous" for that of "monolithic."

Cannon was fond of saying privately that he is not a Trotskyist but a Leninist on the organization question. It was after Trotsky's death that he said it openly. It is, of course, perfectly true that Trotsky had a disagreement with Lenin on the organizational question but that disagreement disappeared completely after Trotsky's group united with the Bolsheviks. For Cannon to say that he is a Leninist and not a Trotskyist on the organization question means in effect to say that he rejects the whole struggle of Trotsky against Zinoviev and Stalin on that question.

A few incidents that occurred in the last two years indicate the trend toward a monolithic party. When in THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL there appeared an article by Joseph Hansen, in which Cannon was portrayed as the Lenin of America, there was vociferous objection from some of the party members. Even some of the leaders of the Cannon faction objected to the article, but only in private; publicly they defended it. Cannon wrote a letter from Sandstone in which he stated that those who criticize Hansen's article do not understand the art of leadership.

mum upon factionalism by giving factional representation in the important committees of the party.

"Of course this condition cannot be eliminated by formal decree. We cannot eliminate factions and factional struggle by declaring them undesirable. No, we shall make the first step toward eliminating factions, tendencies and groups, toward creating a monolithic party in the sense of the Fifth Congress declaration only if at the beginning we recognize the basic cause of the condition; if we recognize the existence in our party of factions, tendencies, and groups runs directly counter to Leninism, to the Leninist conception of what a revolutionary proletarian party should be."

I do not claim that Cannon would now write or say anything like the above paragraphs. He is too smart for that. But his tendency is in that direction.

The above quotation shows that at the time Trotsky was fighting Zinoviev and Stalin on the question of the nature of the party, Cannon was willing, without the slightest investigation, to accept the grotesque perversion of a Leninist party put forth by Zinoviev.

Dwight Macdonald, writing for his *POLITICS*, utilized Hansen's article in an attempt to prove that leader-worship is part of the Bolshevik concept of organization. I replied to Macdonald and in the reply mildly criticized Hansen. The reply was refused publication in the *F. I.*

James T. Farrell sent a letter to the *F. I.* in which he criticized Hansen's article and a scurrilous review of Shachtman's introduction to *THE NEW COURSE*. The letter was refused publication and my request on that score was in vain. Cannon advised Farrell to stick to literature and let experienced people take care of politics, the same answer that Browder gave Farrell when he protested against the Moscow Trials.

Four members of the SWP were censured for organizing a discussion on the Russian question with some members of the WP. This was done at the initiative of the Political Committee at a time when tremendous political problems confronted the revolutionary movement. The censure was intended to prevent the SWP members from discussing political questions and even from talking with WP members. To justify this nonsense Cannon wrote that the party has a right to control not only the political but the personal lives of the members.

One of the most disgusting spectacles staged by the SWP leaders was to instruct the Control Commission to investigate the "disloyalty" of the Minority. The Minority openly declared its intention to fraternize politically with the WP. It organized socials and classes, inviting the members of the WP to participate. I spoke at meetings of the WP members. These were political acts on our part. The Cannonites transformed a political question into one of "disloyalty."

All these incidents can be aptly described as Stalinist germs. They indicate an attitude which is common only among the Stalinists and is completely alien to Bolshevism. Were these isolated incidents to be explained on the basis of habits acquired through participation in the Stalinist movement or did they indicate a trend in the direction of building a monolithic party? For us unity was the test. The rejection

of unity together with the dishonest discussion connected with that rejection convinced us that the leadership of the SWP was consciously on the road of building a monolithic party. The formal adherence to democratic centralism was meaningless in view of the actual policies followed on all of the organizational questions that became controversial issues.

It is not only in the organizational field that signs of degeneration are visible in the SWP; on the intellectual arena the level of the party has taken a sharp descent since the death of Trotsky. The sole consideration of the leaders of the party is to see to it that not one iota of the program left by Trotsky is changed. The fiercest resistance meets any attempt to introduce a new idea.

INTELLECTUAL DEGENERATION

We have a "finished program," wrote one of the theoreticians, E. R. Frank, not meaning thereby a fully rounded program, as Trotsky meant when he spoke of Lenin's finished program, but something that is final and unchangeable. We have an "unchanging program" warned J. P. Cannon.

Two instances illustrate the point. At the October 1943 plenary meeting of the National Committee the official resolution was a compilation of generalities about the coming proletarian revolution in Europe. Not one word was written about the necessity of democratic demands as a means to set the masses in the struggle against the existing regimes and the Socialist and Stalinist parties. Comrade Felix Morrow introduced some amendments dealing with the necessity of such demands. That was labeled a petty-bourgeois deviation. Cannon intervened and offered as his contribution a verbatim section of the Transitional program.

When Walter Reuther during the strike against General Motors raised the slogan of a wage raise without a price rise, the leading theoretician of the SWP, Warde, objected because it was not included in the Transitional program.

At the last meeting of the National Committee which I attended, I said that we must indeed be grateful to Stalin

that he did not murder Trotsky before 1940. For had he killed Trotsky in 1937, the Cannonites would have had no transitional program to swear by and they would still be opposing a Labor Party. Had Stalin assassinated Trotsky in 1930 anyone who dared raise the idea that a new party and a new international should be created would have been designated by the Cannonites as a petty-bourgeois oppositionist. Every idea introduced by Trotsky, if offered by someone else, would have been held up to scorn as petty-bourgeois revisionism.

Trotsky's ideas are considered as sacred revelation, dogmas to be repeated at every occasion. He who most of all insisted that Marxism is not a dogma but a guide to action, who showed over and over again that he was not bound by any formula and considered the study of reality, of actual events, far more important than a quotation from the masters, has been succeeded by people who "prove" everything by quotations.

I must relate an incident which shows how little respect the SWP leaders have for ideas and how, for them, organizational maneuvers take precedence over ideas. The resolution adopted by the International Conference states that it is the duty of the various sections of the International to "tolerate the presence of the Red Army only to the extent that it is a friendly proletarian armed force having as its objective to guarantee the fulfillment of agrarian reform and the state-ization of the means of production against imperialism and against national reactionary elements, without hindering in any way whatsoever the free development of the working class movement."

We shall not discuss the idea presented, which can be a product only of political idiocy or of complete aloofness from reality. It seems that a majority of Cannon's caucus was opposed to this nonsense, but all of them voted for the resolution, the heart of which is this idea about tolerating the Stalinist army. I say "the heart of the resolution" because

everything else was practically a repetition of previous resolutions.

The members of the National Committee who were opposed to that section of the resolution voted for the resolution without objecting to the section because they were told that to raise the question would give the Minority some advantage. When Felix Morrow made that charge no objection was voiced, and this was tantamount to admission that he was correct.

Can such people be called Bolsheviks interested in a correct political line? No, they are Cannonite cliquists to whom prestige is more important than political ideas.

A most natural question that I am frequently asked is: why did not the Minority remain in the SWP to fight for its ideas? Under normal circumstances a minority is not justified in leaving a revolutionary party because its ideas are not accepted. It was possible for us to remain and by patient, persistent work attempt to win a majority to our ideas. As a matter of fact our struggle against the Cannon clique was not without some success. No more of the leader-worship articles by Hansen appeared in the SWP press. After our fight against the idea that members of the SWP should not even talk with members of the WP the claim was made that by censuring four comrades for discussing the Russian question with WP members it was not meant that party members should not talk with WP comrades. The term "renegade" ceased to be thrown about so freely when referring to the leaders of the WP. Cannon stopped referring to discussions as "kibitzing."

Our decision to leave the SWP and join the WP was based on the fundamental premise that if there is no unity we can do far more fruitful work for the cause of revolutionary socialism in the WP. Were there not in existence a party composed of comrades with the same ideas of a revolutionary party as ours, there would be no alternative for us but to accept the discipline of the Cannonite majority. But with such a party in existence it seems much more effective to unite the forces that are opposed to a monolithic conception

of a party than to keep them divided. To unite them means to strengthen these forces.

A prolonged and severe factional struggle represents a tremendous waste of energy under the best conditions. A factional struggle under a regime of people who see in maneuvering the solution to all political problems means wasting ninety per cent of one's efforts on the most petty issues. For instance, the whole question of unity was transformed into a question of loyalty and disloyalty. The question of democratic demands was shifted to an argument as to whether the United States would or would not send food to Europe—the leading Cannonites stoutly maintaining that this country would not send any food to the European countries.

Another reason for leaving was the fact that had we remained we would have been expelled for fraternizing politically with the comrades of the WP.

Before we proposed unity and before the WP accepted our proposal we regarded the comrades of the WP as devoted revolutionists. After the WP accepted our proposal we regarded them as a tendency in the Fourth International, as Trotskyists. It is significant that the widow of Trotsky who understands Trotsky's method and approach to problems better than any one living, speaks of the *two* Trotskyist parties in the United States.

It was inevitable that the Minority should fraternize politically with the WP. What did this fraternization consist of? Mainly in discussing the problem of unity and all other political problems and in getting together in socials and classes. The fact of the matter is that for most of the Minority comrades it was impossible to discuss with the leading Cannonites and it was easy and profitable to discuss with the WP comrades.

The idea of treating devoted revolutionists as renégades is repulsive. Even if I recognize the necessity of splitting and remaining apart for a period I must treat those who are with me in the great struggle for a socialist society as revolutionists. I can fight them on the point upon which we disagree but

act in the friendliest manner and join with them in all actions on those tasks upon which there is no disagreement. Cannon's attitude of trying to create a stone wall between the members of the two parties was hateful to me. Nothing infuriated and alarmed me so much as the inculcation of hate among the members of the SWP to the members of the WP.

Under the circumstances, the Minority decided to continue political fraternization with the WP regardless of the policy of the Majority. I do not say that the question of fraternization was a principle with us, although the policy against fraternization with revolutionists seemed monstrous to us. Were the SWP a mass party we would have accepted the policy of the Majority in order to remain in the mass party. But since the SWP, although larger than the WP, is still a very small group it seemed to us to be contrary to the interests of the revolutionary movement to abide by the policy of the majority.

To the hue and cry raised against us on the ground that we were violating the principle of democratic centralism we answered that this principle should be observed by revolutionists only when its observance means the building of a revolutionary party and not when it is used to cover up a crime against the revolutionary movement. We understand very well that in the last analysis this means that every revolutionist must judge for himself whether a certain act is so detrimental to the revolutionary movement that he must disregard the principle of democratic centralism. The rejection of unity was a criminal act against the revolutionary movement and democratic centralism played a secondary role with us.

So long as Trotsky was living, Cannon did not openly express any of his "independent" ideas about organizational questions. To a few who knew him he confided that he was "not a Trotskyist but a Leninist" on the organizational question. On theoretical, strategical and tactical questions he was more than willing to follow Trotsky's lead.

Lacking confidence (and justifiably so) in his own ability

to deal with theoretical ideas and not having sufficient confidence in any one else, it was only natural for Cannon, after Trotsky's death, to proclaim that Trotsky had furnished us with sufficient ideas and that all we need is to follow them. Anyone who presented any new idea or even a modification of an old one was looked upon as a disturber of the peace, a "kibitzer," to use Cannon's expression for those who wanted to discuss problems. In a movement founded by one who had nothing of the conservative in him it was declared highly desirable and commendable to be conservative!

The greatest importance was placed on organizational questions and by that is meant the creation of a machine which responds automatically to the will of the controllers of the machine. The machine was to be kept in good order through a system of education based on questions and answers derived from Cannon's handbook "Socialism On Trial." That constitutes the catechism.

The concept of a party as a living organism with intellectual controversy and participation in the class struggle as the two vital necessities of its life is completely alien to Cannon. As I indicated above he is the product of the Zinovievist period of the Communist International. He once wrote an article declaring that the weakness of the Communist Party was due to the fact that it was not sufficiently monolithic.

As part of the explanation of the success of Cannon one must not overlook the role which a machine plays even in a small organization. Many who otherwise would be working for a capitalist under adverse conditions find themselves doing easy and pleasant work, find themselves in a position where they appear as leaders—on a small scale it is true, but still leaders with some prestige. They could not possibly play that role outside of the machine.

The greatest number of SWP members has been recruited since Trotsky's death. They have been educated on Cannon's concepts of organization and on Trotsky's polemical exaggerations against the Minority of 1940. Very few of the members know of *The New Course*, where Trotsky

presents a picture of what a real Bolshevik organization should be. The members are devoted revolutionists but one could also say that of the "third-period" Stalinists (between 1929 and 1934). They are militant, aggressive, self-sacrificing. But they do not have the critical attitude that should prevail in a revolutionary Marxist party.

BUILDING A REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

The task that confronts us at present is the same that faced the revolutionary Marxists in the last quarter of a century—the building of a revolutionary party. We start from the basic premise that for a successful struggle for socialism the working class must have its own party composed of the most conscious, the most militant elements of the proletariat. To look for a victorious struggle on the part of the working class in spite of its subjection to the degrading influence of capitalism, without the leadership of a party that is composed of those elements who have to a certain extent freed themselves from those influences, is utopian.

The party that we want to build must base itself firmly on the fundamentals of Marx, Lenin and Trotsky. But it must be a party where the statements of the great teachers of socialism are not to be considered as sacred dogmas. Our party must be one where one can feel perfectly free to introduce new ideas and challenge old ones; where new ideas will be met on the plane of argument and not of name-calling. We want a party which will consider the facts of life much more important than any theory. In the party that we want to build controversies will not be settled by quotations but by an analysis of all the existing factors.

In the party we want to build discussion will not be considered as "kibitzing" but as a vital necessity for the solution of problems and for the education of the membership. Discussion should not be counterposed to activity; it is part of the activity of a party. It cannot monopolize the life of the party but without it there can be no purposeful activity.

The backbone of a revolutionary party must consist of

militant proletarians. But we must reject the concept that their task is only to follow the leaders. We must consciously aim to educate the workers who join the party to have a critical spirit. We understand very well the difficulties which confront every worker in his attempt to educate himself in the principles of Marxism. He works too hard under capitalism to be able to devote many hours to reading and study. But from the very moment he enters the party a worker must be made to feel that while he is educating himself he must listen to arguments carefully and make up his mind to the best of his ability on the basis of the arguments. A critical attitude on the part of the rank and file is essential to a revolutionary party.

Comrade Felix Morrow and other comrades who were with the Minority have decided to remain in the SWP. While I am of the opinion that their efforts there will not be one-tenth so fruitful as working in the WP I wish them all the success in the world. Their success is our success for it will mean eventual unity of the two parties and a tremendous strengthening of the Trotskyist movement.

Many comrades want an explanation for the situation that has developed in the SWP. The "theoreticians" of that party constantly demanded of us to show the "social roots" of the Cannon clique. Starting from the premise that Stalinist tendencies must come from a bureaucracy which has social roots either in a degenerated workers' state or in the trade union officialdom of a capitalist state, they tried to confound us by asking for proof that the clique is part of the degenerated workers' state or the trade union bureaucracy. We simply laughed at this formalistic thinking driven to a nonsensical extreme.

It is undeniable that when Trotsky was living he did all of the theoretical thinking for the Trotskyist groups the world over. We all recognized his great genius and for the most part accepted his ideas without critical analysis. It was a tremendous asset to have a Trotsky at the head of our movement, guiding its intellectual life, but it was also a dis-

advantage in that it prevented the development of independent thought on the part of Trotsky's followers. The struggle in the party in 1940 showed that to many of the Trotskyists independent thinking was a subject of scorn. The hardened Cannonites not only disagreed with the Minority of that period but they laughed at the idea of arriving at conclusions independent of and opposed to Trotsky.

Our party must be a disciplined party but its discipline is not based on rules and regulations. It is the discipline of comrades devoted to a great cause and conscious of the fact that without discipline in action they can achieve nothing. It is a discipline based primarily on the correctness of the leadership and not on the ability of the leaders to order people. A living, thinking party is not an undisciplined party; it has a higher form of discipline than the monolithic party.

Particular ideas and practices which now prevail in the SWP and which may be termed "Bolshevism-a-la-Cannon" must be rejected as alien to a revolutionary party. There must be no build-up of leaders. An opponent party must not be considered an "enemy party" when it is close to us in program and activities; comrades who for some reason split from us are not to be considered "renegades," when they are loyal to the revolutionary movement, and our members must not be filled with hate toward such comrades.

Distortion of an opponent's position must not be tolerated; the position and arguments of an opponent must be presented with the greatest honesty.

The Cannonite practice of discussing all important political and organizational questions in a secret bulletin must be rejected. All good discussion articles on all important questions should be included in the public theoretical organ; and the discussion bulletin should be available to all those who are interested. A revolutionary party is part of the working class and has no secrets from the workers.

Our very existence is based on our confidence that the kind of a party we want to build can be built and will be built. Our confidence stems not only from the fact that such

a party is necessary but also from the historical fact that such a party was actually created and succeeded in leading the Russian workers to a successful revolution. I am firmly of the opinion that the Bolshevik party under Lenin and Trotsky was the kind of a party that we want to create.

This does not mean that we defend every act of the Bolshevik party. There is room in our party for those who think that in such and such a particular case the Bolsheviks were wrong. To me Bolshevism means the theoretical, strategic and tactical ideas by which the Russian masses were mobilized for a successful assault on the Russian capitalists and landlords. Ninety times out of a hundred they who sincerely attack Bolshevism on some organizational or theoretical question confuse Bolshevism with Stalinism. Cannonism has furnished another weapon to those who do not understand but wish to attack Bolshevism.

One idea that we must put forth and which the Bolsheviks never thought of mentioning is the necessity to guard against a bureaucratic degeneration, such as the Stalinist degeneration. Trotsky once stated that it is not the aim of a revolutionary party to guard against degeneration but to make the revolution. I cannot accept that idea.

One of Trotsky's great contributions to Marxism is his explanation for the Stalinist degeneration. He showed that it was due to the backwardness of Russia and the failure of the world revolution. The terrible lack of goods with which to satisfy the needs of the masses created the conditions necessary for the usurpation of power by the bureaucracy. It now appears most likely that the taking of power by the working class will be followed by a period of scarcity or, under the best of circumstances, a period of difficult readjustment. The danger of a bureaucratization of a section of the party is very great. It is too risky to depend solely on favorable economic conditions to prevent degeneration. We must depend also upon a party of alert and independent revolutionists who will offer the greatest resistance to any attempt by any section of the bureaucracy to usurp the power of the workers.

Our party must educate its members to be aware of the close connection between the great aims of socialism and the means used to build the party and achieve those aims. The revolutionary socialist who constantly keeps the ultimate aims of socialism in view will inevitably reject clique politics, petty maneuvering and distortion of an opponent's position as methods hostile to the achievement of our aims, as methods laying the basis for a future degeneration. The methods of Cannon are methods of people who see in the organization an end in itself and who forget the great aims of our party.

THE WORKERS PARTY

A few days after we left the SWP and joined the WP, the latter party had a national convention. The delegates showed an independence that is impossible to conceive of in the SWP. The constant shifting of delegates, depending upon the issues and the arguments showed an open-mindedness and independence that are practically inconceivable in the SWP. In speaking to the delegates one did not feel as if he were arguing with a stone wall, a feeling that comes over one when speaking to a gathering of members of the SWP.

It is true that the SWP at present has greater connections with the trade unions and has more members and more proletarian members. But the Stalinists have still more members and more industrial workers who are members. We have supreme confidence that in the end a living, thinking membership will attract to itself the best elements among the workers, and by virtue of a correct political line which can come only as a result of tackling problems on a Marxist basis, will succeed in winning the masses.

We have received a severe blow because the SWP leaders have rejected unity. We do not give up our hopes for ultimate unity. But if there is no unity then we shall continue to build our party, firmly convinced that the principles upon which it is built and an independent revolutionary membership will contribute enormously to the victory of socialism, which to us is impossible without democracy and freedom.

APPENDIX A

Toward a Deepening of the Split

[The following excerpt from the article of Martin may be considered the first official expression of opinion by the leadership of the SWP on the question of unity with the WP, inasmuch as the views of Martin are identical in every respect with those of the leader of the SWP, James P. Cannon.]

Take the question of the Shachtmanites, for example. We witness an attempt, direct or implied, to revise our estimate of the petty-bourgeois opposition. But the question is not ended with our *estimate* of the Shachtman party; it is only started. What follows from this estimate, or the proposal to revise it? To what end is it pointed? If we keep thinking without stopping half-way we must recognize that our estimate inexorably leads us either (1) toward reconciliation and unity, or (2) toward a deepening of the split. The discussion is not completed until that question is decided and reasons given for the decision.

We, on our part, assume that the course toward deepening the split is necessary and correct; our attitude flows from that.

—*Reflections on the 11th Party Convention*, by Martin,
Internal Bulletin of the SWP, April, 1945, page 19.

APPENDIX B

The Principal Obstacle to Unity

Perhaps our greatest gain is in the *kind* of party we have succeeded in building. In it, we have living proof that a Bolshevik party *does not* mean the totalitarian prison so many people have been led to believe it always was and must always be. The democratic character of our organization is not merely our boast. Militants and radicals outside our party know the facts and acknowledge them. Our party is intolerant of any attempts to curb the intellectual freedom and critical independence of its membership. All it demands is rigid discipline *in action* and a high degree of responsibility in building up the party. It is able to make and enforce this demand not only because its main policies have proved to be correct, but because there is no bureaucratic régime, "benevolent" or otherwise, in the party. Without

ever descending to the futility of a "debating society," our party has repeatedly had the freest discussions of political and theoretical questions. Some have been confined to the party ranks, but the more important ones have also been discussed in public, in the pages of our *New International*. Some of them have been extremely ardent, even sharply polemical. Groups, ideological formations, of different kinds have existed in the party and continue to exist; in one form or another, on one question or another, they will probably always exist. But we have no resolutions calling for the "dissolution of factions," and if good Bolshevik practice continues to prevail, we shall never have such resolutions. We have established in our party such a relationship between leaders and members and of all members with each other, and between adopted program and criticism of it, that there is no air in the party for a bureaucratic or clique régime. And there, after all, lies the secret of the absence of permanent factions, as distinguished from ideological groupings. There are no such factions because there is no soil—a bureaucratic régime—for them to grow in.

It might be said that the kind of party we have built up is our richest possession. In itself, it does not guarantee against making political mistakes, including serious ones. But it makes possible a speedy correction of such mistakes if they are made, a correction without the convulsive crises to which bureaucratized parties are doomed whenever a serious difference of opinion forces its way past the lid.

From this standpoint, it might be added in passing, the big obstacle to the union of the two Trotskyist organizations in this country is not so much the political differences that exist. Although some of these differences are greater than they were five years ago, others have become less acute. In any event, people with even greater political differences could live and work side by side in a single party *provided* it were a normal party. It is no secret, for example, that in our own party close coöperation is possible between comrades who, on some questions, have greater differences between themselves than our party as a whole has, on other questions, with the SWP. The principal obstacle (as this writer sees it) lies precisely in the sterile, bureaucratic régime which the Cannonites have imposed upon and continue to maintain in the SWP, a régime which the new minority in the SWP rightly describes as Stalinist in its trend. Unity is a precious thing. The kind of party that would result from unity is, however, far more important. Our comrades are not disposed for a minute to trade off what they have built up for any régime that smacks of Cannonism.

—*Five Years of the Workers Party*, by Max Shachtman, *New International*, April, 1945, pages 80-81.

APPENDIX C

Resolution for Unity Submitted by Minority of the Political Committee of the SWP

1. It is now more than five years since the groups which we designated as the "petty-bourgeois opposition" left the party. Immediately after the split, they organized the Workers Party under the leadership of comrades with many years of experience in the revolutionary movement. After five years, we note that their activities in the labor movement continue unabated. They publish a weekly agitation paper, *Labor Action* and a monthly, *New International*; put up candidates in elections; conduct fraction work in trade unions, etc. They took with them in the split 40 per cent of our membership; their present activities indicate that they have retained a substantial portion of this number and recruited new elements.

2. Assuming that the Workers Party is but one-third the size of our party, we cannot ignore the possibility of re-unification of the two forces on the ground of their allegedly sparse numbers. Unification would result in a 25 per cent increase of our forces. More important, unification would return to the party cadre elements who are the product of decades of Marxist training and experience and whom we cannot hope to recruit elsewhere.

3. Our attitude toward re-unification must be based on a *political* estimate of the Workers Party. This means not to repeat what we said about the minority at the time of the split, but to analyze without prejudice the history of the Workers Party and the character of its program and present activities.

4. With the exception of the important questions of the nature and defense of the Soviet Union, the Workers Party remains on the fundamental programmatic basis of the Fourth International. Its propaganda, agitation and activities are based in the main on the program of transitional demands adopted by the Founding Conference of the Fourth International.

5. The acid test of a workers' party is its attitude toward imperialist war. Without the slightest hesitation and with no opposition in its ranks, the Workers Party took a Leninist position toward its own imperialist bourgeoisie. It has maintained that position throughout the war. Some comrades deny that this is an acid test of the revolutionary character of the Workers Party; they point to the anti-war position of Martov in World War I and of the Young Peoples Socialist League in this war, as examples of centrists and/or non-revolutionists who oppose imperialist war. The speciousness of this argument is that it ignores the fact that Martov and the Y.P.S.L. remained in parties dominated by social-chauvinists, whereas the Leninist character of the Workers Party's position includes its recognition of the principle that

Leninists must have their own party and cannot remain in one party with social-chauvinists.

6. The comrades of the Workers Party have shown that they remain loyal to the proletarian revolution. On the American scene the Workers Party has followed the same general course as our party: against the no-strike pledge and against class-collaboration through the War Labor Board, for a Labor Party, etc. On questions of the European revolution, it has likewise followed the same course as we, and similarly on tasks of liberation of the colonies, etc. Today the similarity of the two parties' programs and activities has become still closer, with the disappearance into the background of the question of the defense of the Soviet Union, and the appearance in the foreground of the urgent need to defend the European revolutions against Stalin, a question on which the Workers Party is in complete agreement with us. It is inevitable that militant workers will not understand our separation into parties which they deem to be similar in fundamental program and immediate aims. Nor can we justly deny to these militant workers the essentially revolutionary character of the Workers Party.

The Question of Russia

7. The Workers Party position on the Soviet Union is that it is a bureaucratic-collectivist state. However, this does not constitute an insuperable obstacle to unity. Within the Fourth International there have for some years been currents rejecting the concept that the Soviet Union is a degenerated workers' state. Nobody has claimed that the Fourth International must expel comrades who believe that the Soviet Union is a bureaucratic-collectivist state or a state of capitalist restoration.

8. Yet there are comrades of the Political Committee who, while agreeing to the principle that differences on the Soviet Union are no bar to unity within the Fourth International, nevertheless argue that the comrades of the Workers Party do not belong in the Fourth International because they are "revisionists." But revisionists in the classical sense refers to reformists of the type of Bernstein, who distort Marxism for the purpose of giving up the class struggle and the proletarian revolution. The "revisionism" of the Workers Party is obviously not to be confused with Bernsteinian revisionism; the former is a revision of the Marxist theory of the state in the sense that the WP theory of bureaucratic-collectivism is not compatible with the Marxist theory of the state; but we must recognize that the Workers Party agrees with us against Bernsteinian revisionism on the necessity of carrying on the class struggle to proletarian revolution, and denies that it has abandoned the Marxist theory of the state, whereas revisionists make no bones about their abandonment of it. Only those bewitched by words can fail to distinguish between Bernsteinian revisionism which has no place in the Fourth Inter-

national, and the "revisionism" of those who differ with us on the Soviet Union but who do have a place in the Fourth International and actually have a place in several of the parties of the Fourth International.

9. Another argument against unity is that the "petty-bourgeois" opposition has continued to move further and further away from us since the split. This abstract spatial metaphor is not a valid political proposition. It is true that several political differences have arisen in the past five years between the position of our party and that of the WP, but neither singly nor together are they a bar to unity. There are differences on the question of material aid to China; on some phases of our military policy; on our attitude to the Stalinist parties; differences on the national question in Europe during the Nazi occupation may also still exist to a certain extent. But differences on all these questions must be expected with comrades in our own or sister parties of the Fourth International. They are not questions upon which difference of opinion can be expected to lead to a split, assuming the disputants to be genuine Bolsheviks and sensible. On some of these questions we had differences in our own ranks and no serious factional struggle resulted. Moreover, many of those in the WP who differ with us on these questions would be influenced by our arguments were they to be in our party; much of these differences can be laid to the existence of two separate parties. Perhaps also many of our comrades would be influenced by the arguments of the Workers Party comrades if they returned, but this is natural and to be expected. He who objects to unity on the ground of these differences and possible future differences will only find satisfaction in a monolithic party, a party without differences, which in reality would not be a party at all.

10. Another argument against unity is that the very fact that the "petty-bourgeois opposition" split from us shows they do not belong in the same party with us. This argument amounts to saying that once we have split there should never be unity again. It is completely alien to the method of Trotsky, who so often attempted to heal splits in the parties of the Fourth International. Following earlier unsuccessful attempts by Trotsky, our French comrades have recently succeeded in healing a nine-year split with the Molinierists. Our Belgian comrades have again offered unity to the Vereecken group, with whom they have more longstanding and far deeper differences than we have with the Workers Party. The fact that the comrades of the WP split from us is irrelevant to the question of unity now.

Factor in the Split

11. The Political Committee insists on continuing to characterize the WP as "petty-bourgeois" and to use that as an argument against unity. "When did they change?" is the argument against those who say that unity is possible now. A date is demanded of

us. We cannot give it, but we can indicate precisely in what the change consists.

(a) Our characterization of them as "petty-bourgeois" was based mainly on the fact that we considered they had yielded to bourgeois-democratic pressure in abandoning the defense of the Soviet Union during the period of the Stalin-Hitler pact when bourgeois-democratic public opinion was hostile to the Soviet Union. But had they continued to yield to democratic public opinion, they would not have adopted a Leninist position on the war, a position which indicated that the comrades of the WP were capable of resisting far greater pressure than was exerted during the Stalin-Hitler pact.

(b) In the split Burnham was the ideological leader of the petty-bourgeois opposition. But Burnham left the WP and with him also a small group influenced by his anti-Marxist theories; likewise, Macdonald, an anti-Bolshevik, did not find himself at home in the WP. The departure of these elements was an important factor in permitting the group to remain on the fundamental position of the Fourth International instead of taking the path first indicated by Burnham.

(c) During the war the petty-bourgeois elements in the WP found jobs in industry and many of them had their first experience in fighting in the ranks of organized workers. They undoubtedly made many mistakes because of inexperience, but we cannot deny their seriousness of purpose and their devotion to the labor movement. We can also expect that the large number of their members drafted into the army have undergone a significant transformation through their experience with masses in the war.

These are the specific changes which answer the formalistic question as to when the WP ceased to be a petty-bourgeois group.

12. Even if it had remained a petty-bourgeois group, that would be no principled obstacle to unity, for even when we characterized them as a petty-bourgeois opposition the party was willing to keep them in its ranks. Although the organizational question was raised in the form of an indictment of the Cannon régime as a bureaucratic-conservative tendency, and although that question played an important role in the struggle culminating in the split, the basis of the struggle was the question of the defense of the Soviet Union. Under the guidance of Trotsky, we took the position that a split on this question was not justified; that it was possible and desirable for the minority to accept discipline in action and to strive further to win the majority of the membership to its point of view. Trotsky proposed that the minority be given guarantees that factions would not be prohibited; that no restrictions would be imposed on factional activity other than those dictated by the necessity for common action; that the minority could choose to have an internal bulletin of its own or a common one with the majority. The minority demanded the right to publish a public newspaper agitating against the party posi-

tion. This right the majority rejected as irreconcilable with Bolshevik procedure. The split occurred because the minority violated the convention decision denying it permission to publish a public organ.

13. It is clear from the facts that led to the split that either the elimination by history of the question of the defense of the Soviet Union or a willingness on the part of the comrades of the WP to accept the conditions proposed by Trotsky to avoid the split should lead to a serious attempt at re-unification.

14. The question of the defense of the Soviet Union has not been eliminated by history, but it is no longer the burning question that it was in 1940. The burning question today is the defense of the European revolution from Stalin, on which both parties agree. This creates the possibility of working together again in one party. No one can say if and when we are likely to bring to the fore again the slogan of defense of the USSR. The variant of a fairly long term of peace between the imperialists and Stalin is more likely to occur than the variant of war. At any rate, it is necessary to invite the WP comrades to re-enter our ranks, offering them the same conditions that we were willing to offer them in order to avoid the split.

The Issue of Unity

15. How the WP will react to such an invitation is not certain. The important thing is to work out a correct line for our party on this question: to invite the WP to unite with us on the same conditions we offered in 1940. We shall benefit no matter what attitude the WP takes. A refusal on its part can be utilized to tear away some of their supporters within and outside their party. Acceptance means increasing our membership by several hundred among whom are capable comrades with many years of experience in the revolutionary movement. It means eliminating a party whose existence side by side with ours causes much confusion.

16. An attitude which condemns those who split to permanent separation from the party regardless of their loyalty to the revolution, is incompatible with the true spirit of Bolshevism. In the course of building a Bolshevik party, sharp differences of opinion, even bitter struggle and splits, are almost unavoidable. Unification after a split, when tempers have cooled, when events have eliminated or pushed to the background the cause of the controversy, is just as obligatory as refraining from splitting. We correctly characterized the split as a criminal blunder against the movement, but that does not justify us in forever barring the door to those who left us.

17. The unwillingness to unite with comrades who have different opinions has nothing in common with Bolshevism. Such unwillingness bases itself on the concept of a monolithic party whose leaders, while granting formal democratic rights of discussion, do not in reality, conceive differences of opinion and discus-

sion of the differences as a method of building a healthy Bolshevik party. They do not have confidence in their ability to convince intelligent revolutionists: they depend upon blind followers. Building the party to them is to create a machine with a membership that is docile and accepts unquestioningly the directives of the leaders. The question of unification with the comrades of the WP is thus of enormous symptomatic importance in determining the kind of party we want to build. The party's decision will be a touchstone indicating the direction in which we shall henceforth move.

—GOLDMAN.
MORROW.
WILLIAMS.

APPENDIX D

Statement on Unity by the National Committee of the WP

1. The National Committee of the Workers Party takes note of the fact that a minority group of the Socialist Workers Party, led by Comrades Goldman, Morrow and Williams, has presented a resolution to the Political Committee of the Socialist Workers Party in favor of the unification of that party with the Workers Party. The principal ground given in the resolution for unification of the two parties is that the main political question in dispute in 1939-40, which led to the split in the Socialist Workers Party and the formation of the Workers Party, namely, the difference over the slogan of "unconditional defense of the Soviet Union," is today no longer as acute and topical as it was when the dispute first arose; and that the two parties today have a similar position on the main task in Europe, namely, defense of the European Revolution from the threat of Stalinism and Anglo-American imperialism.

2. The National Committee also takes note of the fact that the Socialist Workers Party itself has officially taken the view that the slogan of "unconditional defense of the Soviet Union" does not, at the present time, occupy the prominent position it was given at the beginning of the war, that it has receded into the background.

3. The Workers Party stands for strengthening the forces of the Fourth International in all countries, the United States included. Therefore, it also stands for the unity of the Fourth Internationalists in this country in a manner and on a basis calculated to give the greatest assurances of healthy progress.

4. We are obliged to record our disagreement with the motivation for the modification of the Socialist Workers Party's position on the defense of Russia in the war. It is also well known that we

still have important differences with the Socialist Workers Party on a number of political and theoretical questions. However, the range of these differences do not go beyond what is permissible within the ranks of a single revolutionary party. Furthermore, our estimate and criticism of the official régime maintained by the representatives of the majority in the Socialist Workers Party has not been changed. The fact that these representatives are now so categorically opposed to unity with the Workers Party, as well as their opposition to any united action with the Workers Party, is confirmation of our estimate. Nevertheless, the interests of uniting the Fourth Internationalists in the United States on a sound foundation are more important than the régime in the Socialist Workers Party.

5. The Workers Party is therefore prepared to discuss the question of unity with the Socialist Workers Party.

6. However, our National Committee proposes that, in order to test the practical possibilities of living and working together harmoniously in one united Party, as well as to promote the common cause in the working class and the labor movement, the Workers Party and the Socialist Workers Party, through their National Committees, should arrange for joint consultation and cooperation in all fields—trade union, political, defense, etc.—where it is possible, necessary and fruitful.

—National Committee, Workers Party
MAX SHACHTMAN, *Secretary*

APPENDIX E

Reply of SWP to Statement on Unity of the WP

Max Shachtman, National Secretary
Workers Party
New York, N. Y.
Dear Comrades:

Your letter of August 22 with the enclosed statement of your National Committee "On the Unification of the Workers Party and the Socialist Workers Party" has been received and discussed by our Political Committee. We especially note your declaration, in Point 5 of your statement, that the Workers Party is "prepared to discuss the question of unity with the Socialist Workers Party." We are in favor of such a discussion and will so recommend to the next Plenum of our National Committee.

In view of the sharp conflicts which resulted in the split between us and the formation of your own organization five years ago, and in view of the deep differences which have separated us since, we believe that the National Committee's consideration of the question will be facilitated if you will indicate more precisely

and more concretely your view of how the unification is to be brought about and what form it should take.

We have always proceeded from the point of view that programmatic agreement on the most important and decisive questions is the only sound basis for unification; and that, when divergences of opinion occur, unity can be maintained only by the scrupulous observance of the democratic principle of the subordination of the minority to the majority and strict discipline in public activity and action.

If, in the course of the discussion, it appears that we are approaching agreement on the most important political questions, as well as upon the organizational principle referred to above, and that unification is a realistic perspective, then systematic joint consultation and plans for the cooperation of the two organizations for the carrying out of practical work pending the formal unification, would follow as a matter of course. But to attempt to begin with such practical cooperation, prior to a definite approach to unification, would seem to us to put things upside down and lead to a sharpening of conflicts over secondary questions rather than to their moderation. In our view, "the practical possibilities of living and working together harmoniously" flow naturally and inevitably from a basic agreement on the fundamental questions, not vice versa. Friction and conflict arise from political disagreement rather than from personal incompatibility. In the long run, the latter is always subordinated to the former.

In our opinion, the question of unification must be discussed with complete frankness and seriousness. The aim must be to effect a genuine unification on a firm and long-lasting basis. We, for our part, believe that unity would be a good thing if it is firmly based and leads to the strengthening of the party and the building up of the party. On the other hand, a unification followed by a sharp faction fight and another split would be highly injurious to the party.

The views set forth above are designed to give a concrete basis to the preliminary discussions between us. Naturally, we are perfectly willing to hear and consider any different form of preliminary approach which you may wish to make. If you think that any exploratory verbal discussion would facilitate the preparation and organization of the agenda for a thorough-going consideration of the whole problem of unification in all its aspects, a subcommittee of our PC is prepared to meet with you for such a preliminary discussion. Such a meeting can be arranged on short notice by a telephone call to Comrade Stein, Organizational Secretary, at the National Office of the SWP.

Yours fraternally,

J. P. CANNON,
National Secretary,
Socialist Workers Party.

August 28, 1945.

APPENDIX F

Reply of Workers Party to SWP Letter

James P. Cannon, National Secretary
Socialist Workers Party
New York, N. Y.

Dear Comrade:

Our Political Committee has discussed your letter of August 28 on the question of the unification of the Socialist Workers Party and the Workers Party, and wishes to place before you its views on the matters dealt with in your communication.

We have taken note, first of all, of your statement that you are in favor of a discussion on the question of unification of the two parties and will so recommend to the next Plenum of your National Committee. We have no doubt that such a discussion, carried on with the candor and seriousness to which you refer, and animated by a mutual desire to reach speedily the solid basis for unity which we believe exists, can result in the consolidation of a strong and healthy party of the Fourth International in the United States, with stimulating effects upon the movement in every other country. The reasons for this conviction have already been stated in a general way in the Resolution on Unity adopted by our National Committee and sent to you on August 22.

To us, the central question to settle is the basis for unification, which, in the concrete case, is the question of the basis for the revolutionary Marxian party. You state in your letter that the Socialist Workers Party has "always proceeded from the point of view that programmatic agreement on the most important and decisive questions is the only sound basis for unification." As we have understood this conception, which applies not only to the basis for unification between two revolutionary organizations but in general to the basis for the existence and functioning of a revolutionary party, we are able to subscribe to your formula. In the present case, however, the concrete meaning of the formula is not sufficiently clear to us. The ambiguity to which it lends itself is heightened in our minds precisely because of what you call "the split between us and the formation of your own organization five years ago, and...the deep differences which have separated us since."

If, by "programmatic agreement on the most important and decisive questions," you refer to agreement with the fundamental principles of Marxism and the basic program of the Fourth International as worked out in the whole period, that is one matter. In that case, any preliminary discussion between us could only establish the fact that on this plane, the plane of basic program and principle, the two parties are close enough in their positions to require and justify immediate unification, on grounds similar to those which made their membership in one party possible and

desirable in the period prior to the split. We are quite prepared to engage in such a discussion, but our knowledge of the similarity of position of the two parties on this plane, as revealed in their public documents, causes us to regard such a discussion as a formality.

In other words, we feel, for our part, that an extensive discussion for the purpose of establishing "that we are approaching agreement" on such basic questions is not essential. On these basic questions, sufficient agreement already exists to warrant unification, and a discussion could only record that fact.

If, however, "programmatic agreement" refers to agreement on those theoretical, political and even organizational questions that have divided us in the past, that seems to us to be a different matter. The differences between the two parties on these questions are not less well-known than the points of agreement. They relate to such questions as the class character of the Russian state; the slogan of "unconditional defense of the Soviet Union," the application of the Leninist theory on the national question to the world today, in particular to Europe; aspects of the military policy of the revolutionary party; application of the principle of democratic centralism and the question of party régime; and a number of questions of lesser prominence and significance. In some instances, these are differences between our party and yours; in others, it has not always been clear whether our differences are with positions officially taken by the Socialist Workers Party or only by individual party representatives. But even if in every instance, the specific differences were between the two parties officially, that would not, in our view, rule out unification. Our position on this point has already been set forth with sufficient clarity in the Resolution of our National Committee. We reiterate it here:

The differences that do exist between the two parties are not, singly or severally, of a nature that is impermissible within the framework of one revolutionary Marxist party. It is possible for the two parties to unite now into one, despite these differences, because, as our Resolution states, first, there is a sufficient fundamental agreement in principle between them, and second, the main political difference which engendered the original separation into two parties, namely, the question of "unconditional defense of the Soviet Union," does not now have the same acuteness or prominence that it had at the beginning of the war, according to the declarations of the Socialist Workers Party.

These facts, too, we believe, could only be recorded by a more detailed discussion between representatives of the two parties. From that standpoint, such a discussion would be profitable. By means of a discussion, to be sure, the character, scope and means of regulating (eventually, disposing of) these differences could be established more precisely. But in view of the lengthy period over which these differences have developed, and the vast docu-

mentary material presented on them by both sides, it is, of course, most unlikely that they could be eliminated in one, or even two or three such preliminary meetings, and a completely common point of view worked out.

The fact cannot be ignored that we have the same firmness and depth of conviction about the views we hold on a number of theoretical and political questions as the comrades of the SWP have of their views. It is not to be denied, either, that these views relate to significant and important questions. Furthermore, we are the last to minimize the importance of political and theoretical questions, and of taking a correct position on them.

We do not regard this as a hindrance to early unification, however. As all of us in the movement have held, a "monolithic" party is neither possible nor desirable. In the history of the Fourth International, there have been, and still are, sections in which the differences on certain theoretical and political questions were greater than those which today divide the Socialist Workers Party and the Workers Party. It might be agreed that within the Workers Party itself, we regard as entirely permissible the existence of differences in some controversial questions, which are not less important than those which, on other questions separate us from the SWP. We not only believe that our differences with the SWP today are of such a nature as are quite permissible within the limits of a united revolutionary party, but that they can be fruitfully debated and best settled by means of comradely discussion, organized and conducted in the best traditions of democratic centralism, within the ranks of one party.

These views, if we may repeat, make up our conception of the basis for unification and the basis for the revolutionary party in general. If your views are the same as ours on this score, or similar to ours, we would consider that very little remains for the achievement of unity beyond the discussion and settlement of practical organizational steps. Moreover, agreement on this would dispel any impression that the indispensable pre-condition for unification of two revolutionary Marxist groups is an agreement on every theoretical, political and organizational question. However, if your conception differs in any important respect from ours, we are prepared to discuss it with the necessary objectivity. A precise formulation by you would make it possible for us to express a precise opinion.

There remain three points which are dealt with in your letter.

To the statement quoted above, you add: "...when divergences of opinion occur, unity can be maintained only by the scrupulous observance of the democratic principle of the subordination of the minority to the majority and strict discipline in public activity and action." To this point of view, too, we subscribe. We have maintained this view throughout the existence of the Workers Party. We would of course continue to maintain it within the united party. To this view, we join the view, likewise well-estab-

lished in the revolutionary Marxian movement, that a minority has the right and even the duty to disseminate and defend its special point of view in the party, and that the majority—precisely because it is the majority and therefore mainly responsible for the leadership and integrity of the organization—has the special obligation to protect the rights of a minority as a function of its obligation to preserve the rights and interests of the party as a whole.

Having these conceptions, we believe that a “genuine unification on a firm and long lasting basis” is possible. It goes without saying that we share the view that a “unification followed by a sharp faction fight and another split would be highly injurious to the party.” No serious comrade could contemplate a unification of this kind. A faction fight of any sort, much less a split, following the unification, would compromise both the party and those responsible for such lamentable consequences of the unity. In any case, it seems to us, the unification would have to be followed by a period of intensive common activity in the class struggle, during which—while the opinions and rights of any minority would be respected and protected—factionalism, mutual recrimination, and judgments of the old division would be abjured.

On the basis of the foregoing, we have no difficulty in meeting your request that we indicate more precisely and more concretely our view of how the unification is to be brought about and what form it should take.

Once it is agreed that there is sufficient accord in our positions on the fundamental principles of Marxism to make possible and justify unity; once it is agreed that the differences we do have (which we do not wish to conceal) are of a nature that may exist within the ranks of a single revolutionary party—the only important point left is the discussion of the practical organizational steps for fusing the two parties into one.

If the comrades of the Socialist Workers Party feel that a preliminary exchange of opinions, especially on controversial questions, would make for a better and more fruitful understanding of the respective views among the membership of the two parties, and would contribute to a smoother passage to a healthy unity, we are ready to consider the publication under the joint auspices of the two Committees of a discussion bulletin open to both organizations. If this measure is considered superfluous, and the Socialist Workers Party is of the opinion that a discussion of controversial questions is, under the circumstances, better held after the unity, the decision is in its hands. In that case, representative Committees of the two parties could, as is customary, arrange the details of the fusion. A National Committee could be set up subject to review by the first convention of the united party; similarly in the case of officers of the party. The question of merging the two theoretical and popular organs could also be settled by the two negotiating Committees.

In our case, as we suppose, in the case of the Socialist Workers Party, all these proposals, if agreed upon by the Committees of the two parties, would be subject to the preliminary approval of a National Convention.

One further point, in conclusion. We find that we do not agree with your statement on the possibility or expediency of practical collaboration in a number of fields, to be carried on between now and the eventual union of the two parties.

You say that “to attempt to begin with such practical cooperation, prior to a definite approach to unification, would seem to put things upside down and lead to a sharpening of conflicts over secondary questions rather than to their moderation.”

We call your attention, first, to the fact that it is not practical collaboration that we are beginning with. Both organizations have already begun with the question of unification, the Workers Party by its Resolution in favor of unification and the Socialist Workers Party by its decision in favor of discussing unification. The fact that both parties envisage unification as a practical possibility—and unless they did, further discussion would be superfluous or deceptive—creates, in our view, the basis for considering, now, agreements for practical collaboration in specific, concrete fields of work. Second, it is difficult for us to see why such collaboration would necessarily, or at all, lead to a sharpening of conflicts.

On some questions there are, it is true, differences in theory. But we have always held that it is precisely in those cases where there is a difference in theory or program between two proletarian organizations, and not contrariwise, that practical collaboration is necessary and possible—provided, of course, that the two organizations have a similar standpoint or aim in the practical step. Such collaboration is not less indicated between organizations with a similar program. It is certainly ten times more warranted in the case of two organizations which have already commenced to discuss the question of unity between themselves.

Naturally, when there are specific political disagreements on actual tasks, tasks of the day, practical collaboration is not possible between the organizations involved. For example, we cannot today have practical collaboration between the parties on the question of the election in Detroit. But the two parties can, even now, we are convinced, reach a high measure of fruitful collaboration in such matters as a joint fight, or joint consultation in the fight, for those slogans and aims which we put forward in much the same way in the trade unions. Similar practical collaboration is possible and desirable in the case of the New York municipal elections; in the case of united action against fascists like Smith and Winrod; in the case of joint efforts on behalf of our comrades of the Fourth International abroad; etc., etc.

For these reasons, we request that you reconsider your position.

* * *

We have set forth our views on a number of questions as plainly as we can, with the aim of clearing all obstacles off the road to unity and without concealing our differences in general or our differences, to the extent that they exist, on the question of unity itself. It is quite possible that we have failed to express ourselves on all questions with the necessary clarity, or have failed to deal with all the questions of importance. If that proves to be so, in your view, we are prepared upon request to elaborate our views on any point germane to the question of unification. We are ready to deal with any such points in further correspondence, or orally in a meeting with the sub-committee appointed by your Political Committee. Meanwhile, we await your reply to the present communication.

Yours fraternally,
MAX SHACHTMAN,
National Secretary,
Workers Party.

September 15, 1945.

APPENDIX G

Statement on Unity by October Plenum of SWP

Max Shachtman, National Secretary
Workers Party
New York, N. Y.
Dear Comrade:

Your two letters dated September 15 and October 4, together with the resolution of your Active Workers Conference as well as a report of the oral discussions between the sub-committee of our PC and a corresponding sub-committee of your organization were submitted and discussed at the Plenum of the National Committee held October 6 and 7.

I am sending you herewith a copy of the resolution adopted by the Plenum.

Yours fraternally,
J. P. CANNON,
National Secretary.

October 10, 1945.

1. The proposal for unification made by the Workers Party to the Socialist Workers Party comes after more than five years of bitter hostility and struggle between the two organizations.

2. The split in 1940 was preceded by a protracted factional fight which involved not only the position of the Fourth International on the Russian question but the most fundamental questions of our movement: Marxist theory, tradition, political pro-

gram, methods of party-building, the party régime, etc. The issues in this historic struggle have been explained and amply documented in the two books: *In Defense of Marxism* and *The Struggle for a Proletarian Party*.

3. Our characterization of the petty bourgeois tendency represented by the faction which later became the WP was not predicated solely upon their view of the nature of the USSR and their attitude toward its defense but upon their rejection of the theory, methods and traditions of Marxism, a rejection which was rooted in their social composition and direction. Trotsky wrote: "We, too, have attempted above to prove that the issue concerns not only the Russian problems but *even more* the opposition's method of thought, which has its social roots. The opposition is under the sway of petty bourgeois moods and tendencies. This is the essence of the whole matter." (*In Defense of Marxism*, page 59, our italics.)

4. The 1940 split which gave birth to the WP was a heavy blow aimed at the Trotskyist movement in the United States and throughout the world. The petty bourgeois faction split our party at a time of grave social tension and crisis preceding the entry of the United States into the war, when every revolutionist had the responsibility of remaining at his post and adhering without compromise to the positions of the Fourth International. This split broke away forty per cent of the membership from our party and served to disorient and miseducate many potentially excellent revolutionists. During the ensuing five years the WP has pursued the policy of irreconcilable antagonism toward the SWP with the object of discrediting, undermining and overthrowing it as the vanguard of the American working class.

5. Despite this, the SWP has not only recouped the numerical losses suffered in the split, but under the adverse conditions of the war has made considerable gains in numbers, influence and prestige. It has become genuinely proletarian both in membership and in its predominant leadership. It is deeply rooted in the mass labor movement. Its ranks have become ideologically homogeneous and steeled in the fires of the class struggle.

6. As a result of the successes scored and the experiences undergone during the war, the ranks of the SWP face the coming period with unlimited confidence in the prospects of the party and its eventual development into the mass revolutionary party of the American workers. The objective conditions are extremely favorable for the rapid growth of our party. The profound revulsion of the peoples all over the world against the consequences of war; the resultant radicalization of the masses; the growing militancy of the American workers expressed in the present national strike wave—are bound to accelerate the expansion of our party in all spheres. The response of the workers to *The Militant*, the steadily rising rate of recruitment, the establishment of new branches, and the extension of our influence in the key unions are sure signs of this trend.

7. The Workers Party, by contrast, has shown no ability to grow and attract workers in significant numbers. It has gained no significant influence in the labor movement. The disproportion in the numerical strength of the two parties is growing from month to month.

After more than five years of warfare against the SWP in an attempt to supplant it, the Workers Party has come forward with the proposal for uniting the two organizations. This action marks a significant turn in their policy and opens a new stage in the relations between the two tendencies.

9. In view of this change in the situation, the Political Committee of the SWP expressed its willingness to consider and discuss the question of unification in all its aspects. Its reply of August 27, 1945, to the letter of the WP stated that "unity would be a good thing if it is firmly based and leads to the strengthening of the party and the building up of the party. On the other hand, a unification followed by a sharp faction fight and another split would be highly injurious to the party."

10. Unifications, like splits, are the most serious steps in the life of a revolutionary party. Neither the one nor the other should be undertaken light-mindedly or precipitately, without the most scrupulous survey of all the circumstances and the most careful calculation of the consequences. The advantages and disadvantages of such a move must be carefully appraised in the light of the tasks and perspectives of the party at the given stage of its development. A poorly prepared and ill-considered unification could easily paralyze the work of the party, provoke a new outburst of factional animosity and lead toward a new split.

11. The PC pointed out in its letter: "We have always proceeded from the point of view that programmatic agreement on the most important and decisive questions is the only sound basis for unification." That has been the basis of all previous unifications in the Marxist movement. It is clear that such a basis for unification does not exist in the present instance. Both parties acknowledge that the programmatic differences which led to the 1940 split have not been moderated but that, on the contrary, some of them have been deepened and new important points of divergence have developed in the interim.

12. Thus we are confronted by the proposition of uniting into a common organization two tendencies with sharply divergent political points of view on many questions and sharply conflicting theories of party organization. This proposed unity without programmatic agreement, in fact with acknowledged disagreements between the two tendencies, has no precedent, so far as we know in the history of the international Marxist movement. In preliminary discussions between representative sub-committees of the two organizations, the delegates of the WP emphasized their intention to come into the united party as a separate and distinct tendency. They stated, furthermore, that they would insist on the

right to publish their own discussion bulletin under their own control.

13. Can we contemplate, nevertheless, a unification of the two organizations despite the important differences that exist on political and organizational questions? In other words, are the differences compatible inside of one Leninist party? We have taken the position that this question cannot be determined by any abstract rule, it can only be answered *concretely*. Five years ago, the faction which later became the Workers Party decided that the differences were not compatible with remaining inside the SWP. In the five years that have elapsed, life again proved the differences incompatible, as the WP carried on unremitting warfare against our organization, our principles, our methods, our leadership. Has the WP sufficiently changed to make these differences compatible inside our party today? In other words, can a genuine unity be effected with the WP, as distinct from a purely formal unity which would actually mean two parties under one roof with a new split in prospect? *This can only be answered with sufficient concreteness after the most thorough-going discussion and probing of all differences to the bottom.*

14. The extraordinary nature of this unity proposal makes it all the more imperative that all the programmatic questions in dispute be thoroughly clarified and all the differences between the two parties probed to the depth so that not the slightest ambiguity remains. This preliminary work of ideological clarification and demarcation is the indispensable precondition for any definitive disposition of the proposal for unity and a correct settlement of the relations between the SWP and WP.

15. To this end, this Plenum of the National Committee convened for the special purpose of considering this question therefore resolves:

a) To endorse the letter and actions of the Political Committee in response to the letter from the WP;

b) To authorize the Political Committee to prepare and carry through a thorough discussion and clarification of the theoretical, political and organizational issues in dispute, and fix the position of the party precisely on every point in preparation for the consideration and action of the next party convention;

c) To reject any united front for propaganda. The SWP must continue to conduct its propagandistic activities in its own name and under its own banner and utilize these activities to aid direct recruitment of new members into the SWP. At the same time, the Plenum authorizes the Political Committee to invite the WP to collaborate with our party in practical actions in those cases, where in the judgment of the Political Committee, such collaboration would be advantageous in serving practical ends without blurring or compromising political lines.

APPENDIX H

Resolution Submitted by SWP Minority to October Plenum

Plenum Resolution on Unity with the Workers Party

1. The Plenum declares that the Socialist Workers Party and the Workers Party are sufficiently in agreement on basic program to require and justify unity. The political differences between the two are compatible with membership in one revolutionary party.

2. The Workers Party resolution and letters on unity constitute a significant change in the policy of that group. Hitherto it had justified its split and continued separation from the SWP on two grounds: (1) Its opposition to the SWP's defense of the Soviet Union, (2) the bureaucratic régime in the SWP. Recently, as the question of defense of the Soviet Union receded into the background, the WP had based its entire justification for separate existence on the régime in the SWP. Now, however, the WP is compelled to admit that it cannot continue to defend this position; it states that "the interests of uniting the Fourth Internationalists in the United States on a sound foundation are more important than the régime in the SWP." When the WP now states that the political and theoretical differences "do not go beyond what is permissible within the ranks of a single revolutionary party," it is at last accepting the position laid down by our party at the time of the split in 1940.

3. In the united party, the present program of the SWP will prevail, by virtue of the fact that we, as the WP admits, constitute the majority. The WP's communications to us explicitly recognize the principle of democratic centralism, thus pledging that as a minority it will be bound by discipline in action.

4. These commitments clear the path of practically all obstacles to unity except one. The remaining obstacle is a fear of unity by many of our members and perhaps also by members of the WP. The factional strife of 1939-40, the split and the more than five years of separate existence have left deep scars. It is advisable to eradicate this subjective element before formally consummating unity.

5. We believe the necessary spirit of unity can be created by a period of collaboration and cooperation prior to unification. Having declared ourselves for unity, such collaboration and cooperation is conceived by us, not as a united front between parties with a perspective of separate existence, but as concrete preparation for unity. Among the preparations there shall be joint membership meetings, joint discussion bulletins, joint public meetings, collaboration in trade union work and other fields of activity.

6. The comrades of the WP have asked recognition of their right to publish a bulletin of their own within the united party.

Such a right of any tendency in a Trotskyist party is taken for granted by us. But to recognize such a right and for comrades to exercise it, are two different things. Normally, where the party provides adequate opportunity for discussion in bulletins and the theoretical organ, the interests of the party as a whole and of the minority are better served by refraining from publishing a separate bulletin.

7. While we explicitly recognize the right of any group within the party to have its own bulletin if it so desires, we urge the comrades of the WP to refrain from exercising this right under the given circumstances in order to achieve unity on a proper basis. We guarantee them ample opportunity to present their point of view.

8. However, both we and the comrades of the WP will be in a better position to decide this question at the end of the period of cooperation and collaboration. We therefore propose to leave the final decision on it until the final steps for consummation of unity, with the understanding that we do not make it a condition of unity that the comrades of the WP refrain from issuing their own bulletin.

9. In view of the above decisions, the Plenum considers that there is a basis for collaboration between the majority and minority in the SWP in effecting the steps toward unity with the WP. The Plenum therefore accepts the offer of the minority to collaborate in this task and instructs the Political Committee to give representation to the minority on the negotiating committee. The Plenum takes note of the statement of the minority that, having formed its faction on the issue of unity, it will dissolve its faction when unity is consummated, leaving the remaining differences for discussion on the plane of tendency, articles and lectures in the party organs and branches.

BENNET,
GOLDMAN,
MORROW,
WILLIAMS.

APPENDIX I

Statement of Minority on the Cannon-Stein-Frank Resolution at October Plenum

1. The resolution is designed to prevent unity. Opposition to unity is the privilege of any comrade. What is reprehensible in the Cannon-Stein-Frank resolution is its refusal to answer any of the questions which are central to the unity proposal: its evasion of an answer to the question whether or not the two parties are sufficiently in agreement on basic program to require and justify unity; its evasion of an answer to the question whether

or not the political differences between the two parties are compatible with membership in one party; its evasion of an answer to the question whether or not the aim of the discussions with the Workers Party is to ascertain more accurately the political positions of the WP or the aim is to attempt to get the WP to abandon some of its political positions as a precondition for unity; its evasion of an answer to the question whether the WP's proposal for a tendency bulletin in the united party is or is not a right of any tendency in a Trotskyist party.

In their speeches the supporters of the resolution pretend that the difference between them and the minority is that the minority wants to rush speedily into unity whereas the majority wishes to move more slowly. This is completely untrue. As the minority Plenum resolution makes clear, we insist on a considerable period of preparation for unity by means of cooperation between the two parties *after* a decision by our party in favor of unity. This period of preparation is made necessary above all because the majority leaders have prejudiced the membership against unity.

On the other hand, the position of the Cannon-Stein Plenum resolution is not one of moving more slowly toward unity, but not to move at all toward unity.

2. In paragraph 11 the resolution repeats the formula of previous majority documents that programmatic agreement is the basis for unification. We of the minority have vainly attempted to get the majority to state unambiguously what it means by that: (1) that the WP must abandon one or more of the political positions on which it differs from us—an absurd demand since it is inconceivable that the WP will abandon its position on the Russian question, the principal disputed issue; or (2) the legitimate proposition that the WP, as an admitted minority, must abide by the discipline of the majority program—which the WP has already agreed to do.

It was bad enough that the majority insisted on using this ambiguous formula in its first letter of August 27 answering the unity proposal—bad since the minority had vainly attempted to amend the letter to state that the political differences are compatible with membership in one party. It was worse still, that, in his speech of September 1, Comrade Cannon, despite a direct question from Comrade Goldman, refused to specify what the majority meant by its ambiguous formula. It is nothing less than outrageous that the majority repeats this patently dishonest ambiguity again now, after the WP negotiating committee has repeatedly asked for clarification.

Comrade N. has reiterated the minority position that "A thousand times more important [than the question of defense of the USSR] is unification, rather than the existence of two independent groups who in the *fundamentals* march under the one and the same banner. The program of the minority [i.e., WP] is known to the majority from the former's literature; there is no necessity to discuss it."

If the authors of the resolution disagree with that position, let them say so in their resolution: let them say either that they do not know the program of the WP and must now study it, or that they know the program of the WP and it is in agreement with us on fundamentals or that it is not; let them say whether they agree or do not agree that unification is more important than the question of the slogan of the defense of the USSR.

Anyone who assumes to play any role as a leader in our party certainly knows what the political differences are between our party and the WP. Are these differences compatible with unity? Anyone who thinks they are not compatible should have voted against unity discussions with the WP. Conversely, anyone who voted for unity discussions should have been ready to say that the political differences are compatible with unity. We are confronted with a monstrous paradox. In 1940 and thereafter we of the SWP always maintained that the political differences were compatible with party unity. Now the PC majority refuses to affirm our 1940 position. The argument justifying this refusal is absurd: "Five years ago, the faction which became the WP decided that the differences were not compatible with remaining inside the SWP. In the five years that have elapsed, life again proved the differences incompatible..." The WP was *wrong* when it considered that the differences were not compatible with remaining in the same party, and we and Trotsky said they were wrong, and we did not abandon this position simply because "life," i.e., the mistake of the WP, led it to leave the party.

Why does the PC majority cling to its ambiguous formula about programmatic agreement? Is it possible that, after a period, the PC majority is going to confront us with "proof" that the political differences make unity impossible? But such "proof" must already exist, since we all know what the political differences are. In that case, in all honesty the PC majority should have said to begin with that it does not believe that the political premises exist for unity—more accurately, it should have continued to say this after the WP proposal for unity as it had said this previously.

In his September 1 speech "explaining" the PC letter's ambiguity on this question, Comrade Cannon claimed he was answering this question when he stated: "It is up to the WP to demonstrate that the political differences are compatible with unity." Absolutely false: we have to determine this question for ourselves, independently of what the WP does or does not do.

Comrade Cannon went on to identify this question with the question, "Will the WP's be loyal this time?" i.e., will they abide by party discipline. *This is a different question.* It is a legitimate question. In view of the attitude of the WP leaders in the split of 1940, it was necessary to put the question to them. An affirmative answer to that question assures unity and the WP has answered it satisfactorily. But, before we asked the WP leaders to answer that question, our party should have answered for itself

the question whether the political differences are compatible with membership in one party. Otherwise, it is pointless to ask the WP leaders whether they will abide by party discipline—or indeed to ask them any questions or conduct any discussions.

Until the PC majority adopts the position that the political differences are compatible with party membership, the danger will continue to exist that the PC majority will, on the basis of facts already known to all of us, suddenly “discover” that the political differences bar unity. In that case it would be clear to all that the agreement to discuss with the WP was nothing but a maneuver designed to confuse the party and the International.

We demand an answer to this question. Is there sufficient agreement on the fundamentals of program to make unity possible and desirable? One can honestly answer yes or no; but to refuse to answer the question, after all that has transpired, is clearly a subterfuge.

3. The result of this subterfuge is that we are asked to vote on the absurd proposal of discussions with the WP without any principles laid down as to what shall be the basis for unity. Shall our discussion sub-committee tell the WP negotiators that the latter's position on the Russian question is or is not a bar to unity? No answer in the resolution. Shall our discussers tell the WP negotiators that the aim of the discussions is to ascertain the differences, or that the aim is to get the WP to abandon its positions? No answer in the resolution. Shall our discussers say that the differences on organizational questions are or are not a bar to unity? No answer. In a word, discussions are to be carried on without indicating to our discussers the basis on which they are to discuss. What is the difference, then, between the previous meetings of the Cannon-Stein-Frank committees with the WP committee, and those which presumably will follow the Plenum? The previous meetings were characterized by the Cannon-Stein-Frank committee as not negotiations but discussions since, they stated, they had no authority to negotiate and no instructions on what basis to negotiate. Future meetings, on the basis of their resolution, will be no different than the previous ones. In that case, why call a Plenum and adopt a Plenum resolution? Why, indeed, except to go through the motions of pretending to consider the unity proposal seriously.

4. The WP negotiators have asked a series of key questions concerning the basis and purpose of the discussions. They summarize these in their letter of October 4 to the Plenum and request of the Plenum that it answer these questions. They ask that an end be put by the Plenum to the situation where in the SWP committee is “in a position where it cannot and does not make any proposals of its own on the question of unity, where it cannot express itself definitely on proposals made by us, and where it is even unable to declare that the SWP has decided in favor or in opposition to unity itself.” They further ask the Plenum to take

a position “on the series of proposals made by us for the basis on which the unification should be achieved...” These requests are not only reasonable but one can hardly imagine how discussions can continue without answering them. Yet the resolution evades them. It will be an evasion of its duty if this Plenum closes without answering these proposals of the WP. One can accept them, one can reject them, but to evade them is politically indefensible.

5. The August 27 letter of our PC, in rejecting the WP proposal for cooperation between the two parties, stated it would agree to cooperation at a later date only “if, in the course of the discussions, it appears that we are approaching agreement on the most important political questions... But to attempt to begin with such practical cooperation, prior to a definite approach to unification, would seem to us to put things upside down and lead to a sharpening of conflict over secondary questions rather than their moderation.”

What, then, is the purpose of the resolution in proposing now “to invite the WP to collaborate with our party in practical actions in those cases where such collaboration would be advantageous in serving practical ends without blurring or compromising political lines.” According to the August 27 letter of the PC, such cooperation would lead to a sharpening of conflicts unless the fact was first established that we are approaching unification definitely. Now, without establishing this fact, the PC proposes cooperation. Here is confusion worse confounded.

We bluntly warn the party and the International: Cooperation after a declaration for unity would prepare the memberships of both parties for unity, but the so-called limited cooperation without a previous declaration for unity can very well serve the aim of preventing unity. Under the given circumstances it is necessary for those who sincerely desire cooperation as preparation for unity to vote *against* the formula of cooperation without a declaration in favor of unity.

6. Anyone who understands the ABC of politics knows that the August 27 letter of the PC agreeing to discuss unity with the WP was a political victory for the PC minority, whose initiative had led to this development. Quite apart from the principle of minority representation, those who initiated the unity proposal were entitled to participate in the unity discussions. Yet the very same PC meeting which sent the letter to the WP also barred the minority from the PC sub-committee which met with the WP.

And this was merely the forerunner of a renewed barrage against the minority which had dared to fight for unity.

In his September 1 speech explaining the PC letter on unity, Comrade Cannon accused the minority: “Perhaps their new idea of unity first and then a bigger split.” The “perhaps” does not save this from being an outrageous accusation. Outrageous not merely because it is not true, but because if the PC majority were to act on it, unity would be put off to the Greek Kalends. For if

one does not accept the propositions of both the minority and the WP that the political differences are compatible with unity; that unity is more important than the régime; that unity can be achieved on a lasting basis—then no political criteria remain for determining the aims of both the minority and the WP. There remains then only the capricious and arbitrary psychologizing of the PC majority concerning what is going on in the minds of the minority and the WP. This approach has nothing in common with Marxist politics.

Superficially more political was Comrade Cannon's further declaration that before unity can take place, the party must first "stamp out disloyalty in the ranks and restore discipline in the party." Certainly this would be true were there disloyalty and indiscipline. But Comrade Cannon falsely applies these terms to the minority's fraternization and discussion with WP leaders and members. We of the minority declare that no amount of such threats and abuse will swerve us from our politically correct and organizationally loyal policy of continuing to urge the WP to persist in its course toward unity despite all obstacles placed in the way. To put off unity until after "stamping out" the pro-unity minority is scarcely the prelude which would usher in unity! It is clear that the attack on the minority as "disloyal" is in reality an attack on unity.

This attack continues at the Plenum. It is "cleverly" left out of the resolution, which tries to assume a statesmanlike tone, but it is the main burden so far of all the speeches of the majority spokesman. On this question, too, we demand an end to ambiguity. If the majority really means what it says, then let it adopt an unambiguous rule governing the situation: one which would forbid the minority from discussing with the WP leaders. In that case we would have to submit to the decision or leave the party. Such a ruling would be proof conclusive of the deep-going degeneration of the party leadership. But its verbal assertion to the same effect is also such a proof.

7. It should be obvious to any political person that the absurd basis on which the discussions are left—on no basis except the whims of the SWP discussers to drag out the talks endlessly—may soon prove unacceptable to the WP. With none of their proposals accepted, with no alternative proposals offered, with nothing decided by the Plenum, the WP may very well conclude that there is no point in continuing such formless discussions. The resolution appears aimed to test the patience of the WP negotiators to the breaking point by an endless series of pointless meetings. In a word, it is calculated to throw responsibility for disruption of discussions on the WP, whereas the reality is that the course set by the resolution must inevitably lead to disruption of discussions. We brand this as trickery and declare that if this

resolution becomes party policy the responsibility for disruption will be on the shoulders of this Plenum.

BENNETT,
GOLDMAN,
MORROW,
WILLIAMS.

October 7, 1945.

APPENDIX J

Reply of Workers Party to SWP Plenum Resolution

James P. Cannon, National Secretary
Socialist Workers Party
New York, N. Y.

Dear Comrade:

Our Political Committee has discussed the resolution adopted by the Plenum of the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party on the question of unity. Before making a definitive reply to this resolution, we wish to afford the SWP the opportunity to make clear to us its position on a number of points. They relate to matters on which the resolution is either ambiguous or erroneously motivated, or which it does not deal with at all.

Your resolution states that "Both parties acknowledge that the programmatic differences which led to the 1940 split have not been moderated but that, on the contrary, some of them have been deepened and new important points of divergence have developed in the interim." So far as any acknowledgment on the part of our delegation to the preliminary discussions is concerned, this statement is erroneous, at least in part. The "programmatic differences which led to the 1940 split" were confined to the question of the "unconditional defense of the Soviet Union" in the war. Our delegation did not and could not acknowledge that the difference on this question has not moderated but deepened. On the contrary, the first resolution on unity adopted by our National Committee took "note of the fact that the SWP itself has officially taken the view that the slogan of 'unconditional defense of the Soviet Union' does not, at the present time, occupy the prominent position it was given at the beginning of the war, that it has receded into the background." The only political difference involved in the 1940 split was the one over unconditional defense of Russia. If there were other, and programmatic, differences, they have not yet been brought to our attention. It is true that since the split other differences have developed between the two organizations. It is also true that on many questions these differences have deepened. We have not sought to conceal this fact or its importance. We emphasize at all times our attachment to our point of view. What we find it necessary to insist upon, however, is that

these differences, deep as they are, are compatible with membership in a revolutionary Marxist party, as contrasted with a party based on the concept of monolithism.

Your resolution refers also to "This proposed unity without programmatic agreement." If this refers, as it seems to do, to our proposal for unity, the statement is erroneous. We have indeed mentioned in other documents our "important differences with the SWP on a number of political and theoretical questions." If, nevertheless, we declared that unity is both desirable and possible, it was, as stated in our letter to you of September 15, because of the "fact that on this plane, the plane of basic program and principle, the two parties are close enough in their positions to require and justify immediate unification, on grounds similar to those which made their membership in one party possible and desirable in the period prior to the split." If it is your view now that there is *no* programmatic agreement between the two parties, or no programmatic agreement worthy of significant consideration, an explicit statement would contribute to the necessary clarification.

Your resolution states further that "This proposed unity without programmatic agreement, in fact with acknowledged disagreements between the two tendencies, has no precedent, so far as we know, in the history of the international Marxist movement." This statement is also erroneous. Our delegation stated that it was hard to recall an example of a similar unification between divergent tendencies in the international *Trotskyist* movement. This is so largely because the Trotskyist movement was for so long a *faction*, formally or in fact, of what it considered the international Marxist movement. However, this faction (tendency) repeatedly proposed unity with the then international Marxist movement (Comintern), which meant its unification with the Stalinist faction, that is, a tendency with which it had far less in common in any field than exists in common between the SWP and the WP today. Furthermore, the international Marxist movement is much older than the modern Trotskyist movement. If the SWP is concerned with precedent, the more than a hundred-year-old history of the international Marxist movement offers any number of precedents of good and healthy unifications between groups and tendencies with greater divergences than exist between ours.

Your resolution concludes with the decision "To reject any united front for propaganda." This statement is erroneous, because it is misleading. It gives the impression that such united fronts have been proposed by the Workers Party. You must be aware of the fact that this is not the case. As we recall them, not one of our proposals for united action between the two parties could be placed in the category of united fronts for propaganda. All of them dealt with proposals for united action in different fields of the class struggle. We proposed, for example, united action in the Minneapolis defense case; in the fight against fascism (anti-Smith campaign); in the trade unions, on such ques-

tions as all progressive unionists, let alone revolutionary Marxists, can and do unite on; in the New York election campaign. We reiterate our point of view on such practical agreements whether or not unity between the two organizations is achieved.

A more important question is the question of unity itself. In our letter to you, dated October 4, we made several specific requests of your Plenum. Except perhaps for the last point, that dealing with practical collaboration, we do not find in your resolution a specific and precise reply.

We asked the Plenum to take steps to terminate the situation where your delegation "cannot and does not make any proposals of its own on the question of unity, where it cannot express itself definitely on proposals made by us, and where it is even unable to declare that the SWP has decided in favor of or in opposition to unity itself."

Your resolution replies with a vigorous attack upon our party. That is of course its right. The attack can and will be answered in due course and in such a way as to promote clarity and understanding of the differences between the two tendencies.

But the resolution does not in any way inform us, or any other reader, of the position of the SWP on the most important questions relating to unity, or even inform us as to whether or not such a position has been taken.

Is the SWP now in favor of unity, or opposed to it? In the preliminary discussions, we were informed by the SWP delegation that the Plenum of its National Committee was convoked for the purpose of giving an answer to precisely this question; in fact, that the date of your Plenum had been advanced to give the earliest consideration to this question. We do not find the answer in the resolution. At least, it is nowhere stated explicitly. We are therefore obliged to conclude that the SWP has rejected the proposal for unity, either as put forth by ourselves, by the minority group in the SWP, or by anyone else, and to act on this conclusion unless you indicate to us that we are in error.

Is the SWP now in a position to act on the concrete proposals made by us on the question of unity? In the preliminary discussions, your delegation pointed out that it was not authorized to do so until its National Committee met and arrived at decisions. We find no answer in the Plenum resolution to our proposals.

Our delegation stated our point of view as to the basis for the unification. Summed up in one sentence, it is this: Sufficient programmatic agreement actually exists between the two given organizations to warrant and make possible unity, and the differences that actually exist are compatible with membership in a single revolutionary party. On this basic question, your resolution takes no position except to say that it "cannot be determined by any abstract rule, it can only be answered *concretely*." We remind you that the question was not put by us abstractly, but quite concretely. The nature and views of the two organizations are well

known to both, and could not be more concrete. Their range of agreement is as well known and as concrete as their range of differences. Our proposals as to the steps to be taken for effecting the unity are not general, but specific—concrete. There seems to us to be no sound reason for failing to take a concrete position.

Our delegation states, as your resolution puts it quite exactly, "That they would insist on the right to publish their own discussion bulletin under their own control." We asked that your Plenum take a position on this proposal. Your delegation indicated that this is what its Plenum would do. Your resolution, however, merely records our statement, but does not say if the SWP accepts or rejects our proposal.

Your delegation at the preliminary discussions was not in a position to make counter-proposals, or proposals of any kind, until the meeting of its Plenum. In the resolution adopted by the Plenum, we find only the proposal "to authorize the Political Committee to prepare and carry through a thorough discussion and clarification of the theoretical, political and organizational issues in dispute, and fix the position of the party precisely on every point in preparation for the consideration and action of the next party convention." The resolution also states that "all the differences between the two parties [should be] probed to the depth so that not the slightest ambiguity remains."

We for our part welcome any discussion of the differences between the two tendencies and are prepared to participate in it to the best of our ability so that the positions are precisely fixed and all ambiguity eliminated. But ambiguity on the question of the unification itself must also be eliminated.

However, your resolution does not give any indication of how the discussion is to be carried on, or what its purpose is with reference to the unification of the two groups.

It is possible that not all the members of the two parties are acquainted with the full nature and the full scope of the differences. A discussion will help acquaint them. But the leadership of the two parties is quite well aware of the nature, scope and depth of these differences. It has expressed itself on them repeatedly and in public. This was also established "formally," so to speak, in the preliminary discussions. The head of the SWP delegation observed, and rightly, in our view, that for the present period the differences are not only known but "frozen." The question we raised then, and now, was simply this: Knowing the nature and scope of the differences as it does, and knowing also that for the present period these differences are "frozen," does the leadership of the SWP consider that unity is possible and desirable? Does it consider that the differences are compatible within one revolutionary party? Your resolution, which was adopted, we note, by the leadership of the party, fails to give an answer to these questions. The same holds true, we note also, of the question asked with regard to the position of the SWP on the

right of a minority in a revolutionary Marxist party to issue a bulletin of its own tendency inside the party.

We agreed with what you wrote in your letter of August 28, that "the question of unification must be discussed with complete frankness and seriousness." You will understand from what we have written above that we find your resolution erroneously motivated, in part, and in other parts ambiguous or silent on what we consider the most important questions. We have before us the statement issued at your Plenum by the minority group in the SWP on the resolution adopted by the Plenum. It declares: "The resolution is designed to prevent unity." We do not wish to agree with this conclusion. That is why, before we arrive at a definitive conclusion of our own, we wish to have from you a reply to the questions we have raised in this letter, and elsewhere, and which your resolution either deals with unclearly or fails to deal with at all.

Upon receipt and discussion of your reply, our Committee will be better able to express its opinion in detail and to make any further proposals it may have. In this connection, we ask you to consider now the matter which has thus far not been dealt with in our discussion, namely, the matter of informing all the other groups of the Fourth International about the developments in the unity question in the United States, and of the contribution to solving this question that they are called upon to make.

Fraternally yours.

MAX SHACHTMAN,
National Secretary,
Workers Party.

October 29, 1945.

APPENDIX K

Letter of SWP Minority to Workers Party on the Question of an Internal Bulletin

Max Shachtman, National Secretary
Workers Party
New York City, N. Y.
Dear Comrade:

The SWP plenum resolution on unity, in referring to the proposal of the WP negotiating committee on a tendency bulletin in the united party, merely states the following: the WP "would insist on the right to publish their own discussion bulletin under their own control." Ostensibly, therefore, the SWP majority does not take a position on this question. However, in the actual life of the party it has become clear that the majority advances the tendency bulletin proposal as a great stumbling block to unity.

For our part, we do not believe that this is the real stumbling

block to unity. Nevertheless we believe that it should be removed. The plenum refused to take note in its resolution of our distinction between the right to a tendency bulletin and the exercise of that right. We believe that the WP should make that distinction and pledge itself not to exercise the right in the united party under the following conditions:

1. That the SWP cooperate closely with the WP for the purpose of preparing the membership of both parties for unity, and that after unity there will be real cooperation of the SWP and the WP;

2. That the SWP recognize the *right* of a minority to issue its own bulletin for the purpose of convincing the membership of the correctness of its views.

Needless to say, nobody could demand nor could the WP comrades agree, to refrain forever from exercising the right of a minority to issue its own bulletin. No responsible minority would exercise that right without great justification, but no responsible majority would ever prohibit it from exercising it. If the right is used unjustifiably, a majority should easily be able to discredit a minority for doing so. But a united Trotskyist party is so all-important today that for the sake of it, we appeal to the comrades of the WP to pledge themselves not to exercise this right, subject to the conditions indicated above.

Fraternally yours,

FELIX MORROW,

For the SWP Minority.

November 15, 1945.

APPENDIX L

Reply of Workers Party to Letter of SWP Minority

Felix Morrow

SWP Minority Group

New York, N. Y.

Dear Comrade Morrow:

Our Political Committee has agreed to the proposals on the question of the tendency bulletin made by the Minority Group of the Socialist Workers Party in your letter of November 15. Your proposals afford us still another occasion for reiterating and amplifying our position. It has been stated with sufficient clarity in our written communications to the Socialist Workers Party and at the two oral discussions that took place between the delegations of the two Parties prior to the recent Plenum of the SWP.

What was involved from the very beginning of the discussion on the unity of the two organizations was not a determination of the Workers Party comrades to issue a tendency bulletin of their own on the very first day of the existence of the projected unity

Party, regardless of circumstances. For example, so far as our Political Committee was concerned, this was made clear in the first report made by its representative to a general membership meeting of the New York Local of our Party, a report substantially repeated to most of the other Locals of our organization several months ago.

As you know, the question involved in reality was the right of the minority in the united Party to issue such a tendency bulletin. The SWP Plenum Resolution is literally correct in stating our position as an insistence "on the right to publish their own discussion bulletin under their own control." In the oral discussions between the delegations of the two Parties, it was not we but the principal representative of the SWP who called attention to the fact that, for example, the leadership of the American Trotskyist movement, himself included, had freely permitted the Oehler group to publish an internal bulletin of its own inside the organization in 1934-1935. Therefore, he added, it was not a question of the "right" to such a bulletin "in the abstract," a right which could presumably be granted; but rather a question of our "attitude." We could not then and cannot today construe this otherwise than as a reference to our *opinions* about the present majority faction of the SWP. These opinions we expressed candidly to the SWP delegation. We pointed to what is generally known, namely, the fact that our comrades do not have sufficient confidence in the present leadership of the SWP, particularly with reference to its record toward inner-party opponents and critics, and are therefore concerned with assuring their democratic rights in the united party by having the minority's right to its own bulletin jointly acknowledged by both sides. We are perfectly ready to admit that abstractly considered this lack of confidence may prove to be exaggerated, or even groundless. In like manner, we admit that common work and common experiences in the united Party may cause the comrades of the Workers Party to abandon their opinions on this score. They are not ready, however, to abandon them merely on demand. What they are prepared to abandon in the interests of unity, has already been made amply clear and precise. We consider it enough.

We can go further and say that even the question of the right to issue a tendency bulletin is, in a sense, only the formal side of the matter. Ordinarily, it would not occupy the place of importance it has been given in the discussion on unity. As you so rightly put it, "we do not believe that this is the real stumbling block to unity." This "stumbling block" is the conception of the SWP Majority Group of the kind of Party revolutionary Marxists should have and build. Our Party shares with the Minority Group of the SWP the conception of the Bolsheviks which was fought for with such emphasis and clarity, especially since 1923-1924, by Trotsky and his supporters. The SWP Majority, in practice, and often in words as well, holds the conception of a "monolithic"

Party, which flies in the face of our whole tradition. We are compelled to say now that unity of the two organizations is possible only if this conception is abandoned. It is primarily in this sense that the question of the tendency bulletin is so important. It serves as the concrete test, at the present juncture, of the conceptions held on the kind of Party we must build—a sterile “monolithic” faction, or a united democratically-centralized party of action in which there is freedom of opinion and grouping, and the assurance of democratic rights for all views compatible with the fundamental program of revolutionary Marxism.

This is how the real issue stands. To it, the other considerations can well be subordinated, including the matter of whether a minority would issue a tendency bulletin the morning after the unification, a year afterward, or at all. It is in this sense that we are prepared to accept the proposals of the SWP Minority.

Fraternally yours,

MAX SHACHTMAN,
National Secy., Workers Party.

November 27, 1945.

Copy to:

J. P. Cannon, National Secretary

Socialist Workers Party

116 University Place

New York, N. Y.

APPENDIX M

Resolution on Question of Unity by European Secretariat of the Fourth International

Having taken under consideration the exchange of documents between the SWP and the WP with a view to their eventual unification, the E. S. on the whole approves the position adopted by the Plenum of the National Committee of the SWP, October 1945.

The E. S. takes note of the fact that since the 1940 split and throughout the war the WP has been consolidated on such political positions as the question of the USSR, the defense of China and India, the national question in Europe, the existence and role of the Fourth International during the war, as well as the conception of the internal régime and of the functioning of the revolutionary party—political positions which can very well be considered as programmatic differences that may render problematic the possibility of these two tendencies coexisting and working efficiently in common within the same organization.

The argument that the termination of the war has acted by and large to diminish the practical importance of most of these differences can acquire any weight only after the two organiza-

tions have engaged in a deep-going discussion on their respective concrete conceptions of the actual national and international policy as well as the régime and the internal functioning of the party in the United States and the International.

The European Secretariat recommends to the leadership of the SWP that it elaborate jointly with the SWP leadership a list of questions to be discussed; that it organize and pursue this discussion in order to make clear just what degree of agreement actually exists between the two organizations. It is after such an examination that the question of the possible unification of the two organizations can be re-examined anew.

January, 1946.

APPENDIX N

Letter of SWP Minority to the International Conference

To the Delegates of the
Conference of the Fourth International

Dear Comrades:

We hope that our representative will have arrived in time to take part in your deliberations. In any event, however, we want you to have before you in writing our answer to the ES resolution of January 1946 on SWP-WP unity.

First of all it is astonishing to note that the ES resolution, without any attempt to answer the arguments of the various sections in favor of unity, merely proclaims in Olympian fashion its solidarity with the SWP plenum resolution which evaded answering the question of unity. If the ES represented the unanimous or well-nigh unanimous sentiment of the International it might be justified in passing over the arguments of those who favor unity. But we do not know of a single section which has adopted the same position as the SWP, much less a single section which has decided against unity. On the other hand, in addition to the voluminous writings of the SWP minority there are the pro-unity resolutions of the RCP of Britain, the RSP of Ireland, the Spanish Group in Mexico, the letter of Comrade N., the letter of the National Secretary of the PCC of Italy, the well-known pro-unity views of the leadership of the BLP of India. In the face of this situation the ES was obligated to indicate at least briefly its answers to the arguments of those who favor unity, but instead it has simply taken sides in a resolution of four short paragraphs.

The ES resolution is absurdly in error when it states that the differences between the SWP and the WP “can very well be considered as programmatic differences.” Only the Russian question can at all justly be termed a programmatic difference. But in any event the readiness of the ES to so characterize the differences indicates that it presumably knows quite well what the differences

are. But then it goes on to repeat the SWP plenum resolution's formula that the two parties must go through "a deepgoing discussion on their respective concrete conceptions of the actual national and international policy," etc., before it can be decided if unity is possible. To any thinking person it should be obvious that there is a crying contradiction between (1) the ES statements indicating it knows what the differences are and (2) the ES statement that the question of unity cannot be decided until after a "deepgoing discussion" of the differences. What has happened is that in adopting Comrade Cannon's line on unity, the ES has had to adopt this absurd contradiction as part of it.

We remind you that when we first introduced our resolution for unity and proposed to send a negotiating committee to discuss unity with the WP, Comrade Cannon answered: "We don't need to send a committee to meet them in order to find the answer to these questions. As to their policy in general and their attitude toward us in particular, we don't need to inquire about that either. It is clearly revealed in their press for anyone who is interested to read." Our answer to Comrade Cannon was that we were not proposing to discuss theoretical, political, tactical questions with the WP since we could favor unity precisely because we, like everyone in the leading cadres of the Fourth, already know the position of the WP on these questions. But it was necessary then to determine whether the WP would accept unity and subordinate itself to the majority in the united party. Once the WP did so—as it did—there was no further need for discussion with the WP before taking a position on unity.

The first attitude of the majority leaders was, then, opposition to unity precisely on the basis of their knowledge of the WP. At that point they rightly took the position that any leader of a party should take, namely, that he has been following the press of the WP and knows its position on various questions and can determine his attitude to the WP on the basis of this knowledge.

But at the October plenum the majority made a sudden, unexplained shift. From knowing everything about the WP and therefore not seeing any use in discussion, the majority switched to asserting that the unity question could only be answered "after the most thoroughgoing discussion and probing of all differences to the bottom." We of the minority branded this shift as a fraud designed to prevent unity; a fraud necessitated by the fact that the majority leaders could not openly admit that their opposition to unity flows from their unwillingness to unite with Trotskyists who have differences with them. Wittingly or not, the ES has become a party to this fraud by its endorsement of the SWP plenum resolution which perpetrated it.

Four months have now passed since the October plenum. What has the majority done about "probing all differences to the bottom"? It has held no meetings with the WP leaders nor written any letters to the WP to organize the discussion. Precisely in

opposition to the idea of organizing the discussion jointly with the WP, the Political Committee at its October 16 meeting adopted the following motion of Comrade Cannon: "*Implementation of Plenum resolution*. That we begin the discussion by a series of articles in the magazine outlining our position on all the questions in dispute between us and the WP, together with our criticism of their position on the points of difference." This motion has remained a dead letter. Not a single article has appeared in the magazine which could conceivably be described as "probing the differences to the bottom." All you will find in *Fourth International* are two or three sideswipes at the WP at the tail end of some editorial. And these, both in letter and spirit, violate the majority's pretense that it is still weighing the question of unity; they speak of the WP in terms applicable only to an enemy and anti-Trotskyist party. In short, there has been no discussion of the differences between the WP and the SWP.

Despite our disagreement with the whole concept of a discussion of the differences prior to a decision in favor of unity, we were ready to abide by the majority decision *if the discussion should actually take place*. Hence, as against Comrade Cannon's motion of October 16, we really sought to implement the plenum resolution, by the following counter-motions at that same Political Committee meeting:

1. That the Political Committee prepare a list of the questions to be discussed and the order in which they were to be dealt with in the magazine. Without such a plan of work, obviously the so-called "Probing" might drag on endlessly. *But the Political Committee voted down our motion for such a plan of work.*

2. The plenum had voted down our proposal for a joint discussion bulletin with the WP. The majority said it would write in *Fourth International* and the WP could answer in the *New International*. However, it was obvious that not one SWP member in ten would see the articles in the *New International*. We therefore made a motion that the Political Committee make available to SWP members through party channels those issues of *New International* containing replies to the SWP articles. *This motion too the Political Committee voted down.*

3. The plenum had rejected our proposal for joint SWP-WP membership meetings as part of the discussion. We therefore proposed an alternative: that as each subject is scheduled for "probing" we invite a representative of the WP to address our membership on it, and vice-versa. *This motion too the Political Committee voted down.*

4. A large part of the majority argument for its plenum decision had been based on the alleged non-Bolshevik ideas of the WP on the organization question. We therefore made a motion to publish in the Internal Bulletin the principal organizational documents of the WP referred to in the majority arguments. *This motion too the Political Committee voted down.*

This left the ostensibly projected discussion between the parties without any joint arrangements for the discussion, without a list of questions to be discussed, without a schedule of the order in which they were to be discussed, without putting into the hands of the SWP membership materials indispensable to the discussion. So what was left of the discussion? Nothing.

Had the majority leaders openly opposed unity, we could have had an honest and profitable discussion which would have served to educate the whole movement. Had the majority leaders undertaken in good faith a discussion with the WP, it could have served to educate the movement. The majority, however, did neither of these things, so that it became impossible either to discuss the merits of unity or the differences with the WP.

This impasse compelled us to the decision to leave the party unless in the coming weeks we can see any sign that we can reasonably consider as a move on the part of the majority toward resuming unity negotiations. We communicated this decision to the majority in a letter dated January 26, a copy of which we enclose.

Since then we have received the ES resolution and have been informed by the majority leaders that they accept "the specific recommendations" of that resolution. We have given careful consideration to the one aspect in which the ES resolution does appear to differ from the SWP plenum resolution. The latter, as we have already explained, rejected all our proposals for approaching the WP to organize the discussion—joint discussions, joint discussion bulletins, joint membership meetings, etc. On the other hand the ES resolution recommends to the SWP "that it elaborate jointly with the WP leadership a programme of questions to discuss; that it organize and pursue this discussion in order to make clear just what degree of agreement actually exists between the two organizations."

We take it that the ES means that the SWP and WP leadership jointly prepare the questions to discuss, jointly organize, jointly pursue the discussion. If so, the ES is now proposing essentially the same types of joint agreements for expediting the discussion that we proposed four months ago.

If the SWP majority leaders were to agree to such a plan of work, we would consider it a step toward unity. For we are confident that any real discussion of the differences between the two parties would only serve to demonstrate the correctness of unity. On one decisive condition: that the SWP majority leadership, in its meetings and arrangements with the WP, show serious signs of a desire to "organize and pursue this discussion." In a word, that the SWP majority does not merely send a representative to go through the formal motions of negotiating for a joint list of the questions to be discussed. The distinction between sending a negotiator and actually negotiating such a list is a very familiar one to all of us, and we are sure that there will be no difference

of opinion between most of you and ourselves concerning whether or not the SWP majority is actually negotiating or not.

We shall therefore await the results of the negotiations between the SWP and the WP for organizing the discussion. If, however, the SWP majority leaders fail actually to carry out the ES resolution's proposal that the SWP leadership "elaborate jointly with the WP leadership" the questions to be discussed, we shall carry out our decision to leave the party and join the WP.

We know that the WP, which favors unity, will make every effort to expedite the discussion. It cannot succeed in doing so, however, unless the SWP majority leaders make clear, as they have not yet done, what they mean by the formulas of their plenum resolution, particularly:

1. "Probing the differences to the bottom." Does this mean that there are differences or aspects of differences which are unclear to them? In that case they must specify what is clear to them and what is not. For example on the Russian question: what is it they do not know about the WP position? Merely to put down on a piece of paper, "The Russian Question," may seem to be literally complying with the ES proposal to prepare a list of questions to be discussed, but obviously serves no serious purpose of clarification.

2. "Programmatic agreement.... It is clear that such a basis for unification does not exist in the present instance." Does this mean that there can be no unity unless during the discussion the WP abandons one or more of its so-called programmatic differences? In that case there is no point to discussing at all, since everyone knows the WP will maintain its political positions. But if the SWP majority does not require the WP to abandon any of its political positions as a precondition for unity, then they should be ready to state in advance that the political differences are compatible with membership in one party. The political differences would still have to be discussed but only to educate the membership after a decision for unity. The discussion preceding a decision on unity should, in all logic, be limited to the only questions which remain relevant to unity, namely the specific organizational guarantees demanded by the SWP majority to assure the unity of the united party. Until the SWP majority leaders answer the question whether the political differences are compatible with membership in one party, and until they answer it in the affirmative, it is pointless to ask the WP leaders for organizational guarantees that they will abide by party discipline.

We hope that the SWP majority leaders, in formally accepting the ES proposal for organizing the discussion jointly with the WP, will employ it for actually proceeding to a reconsideration of their previous course. Their past conduct permits us no optimism in this question, but we are ready to exhaust every last possibility for unity.

We ask you to give to the arguments for unity the consid-

eration which the ES, if we are to judge from its resolution, did not give. Your decision in this instance will inevitably constitute a major precedent for the future. On every continent today the question of uniting Trotskyist groups into a single section in one country is posed. As we have stated in our previous letters, we do not ask you to *order* the SWP to unite with the WP. It would not be desirable to *force* unity. Without wholehearted acceptance by a majority of the party membership, the unity would not be long-lasting. What we ask is that you recommend and urge unity. Such an expression of the public opinion of the International may go far to open the eyes of the best elements who have blindly accepted the SWP plenum resolution.

With our warmest comradely greetings,

ALBERT GOLDMAN,
FELIX MORROW,
For the SWP Minority.

February 12, 1946.

APPENDIX O

Statement of the Workers Party on the Resolution of the European Secretariat

To All Delegates to the International Pre-Conference

To All Sections of the Fourth International

The Political Committee of the Workers Party wishes to state its opinion on the resolution adopted by the European Secretariat in January, 1946, dealing with the unity negotiations between the WP and the SWP in the United States. The leadership of the International and of all the sections and, for that matter, every member has the right to demand of the Workers Party a frank and unambiguous expression of its views on the question of unity. This we have given not only in numerous articles in the public press but in resolutions formally adopted by our National Committee, in the exchange of correspondence with the SWP and the Minority of the SWP and most recently in our communication to the European Executive Committee. The January 1946 resolution of the European Secretariat affords us an opportunity to reiterate our views.

The resolution of the European Secretariat is a shocking document, which does violence to the program, to the tradition and to the best interests of the Fourth International. We deem it necessary to appeal to the delegates to the International Pre-Conference and to all of the sections to reject this resolution. The reason for this appeal is indicated by all we have written and done in the past several months on the question of the unification of the WP and the SWP. It can be restated here briefly.

I.

The Secretariat "recommends to the leadership of the SWP that it elaborate jointly with the WP leadership a list of questions to be discussed," etc. We want to emphasize right at the outset, so that there can be no possible misunderstanding, that we are and have always been for the most thoroughgoing discussion with the SWP on all theoretical and political questions that are in dispute between us. We welcome such a discussion, whether it is conducted in accordance with "a list" or not. We shall participate in it, to the best of our ability, in order to make clear, again, just what our position is on the questions in dispute and just wherein we differ with the positions of the SWP. As in previous discussions conducted in the press of the two organizations, this new one will once more make clear not only wherein we differ but also the framework of our agreement.

But if such a discussion is all that the resolution of the ES means, namely, a public discussion between two political organizations—whether arranged jointly or not—it means nothing more than has been taking place for the past six years. In other words, such a debate obviously need have no more relationship to the question of unity today than it has had in the past six years during which it was carried out. In other words, the ES proposes to do nothing and change nothing in the discussions that have been carried on through the public press of the two organizations since the split in 1940. The decision adopted by the Political Committee of the SWP for the purpose of "implementing" the resolution of the European Secretariat shows that this and nothing else is precisely the meaning that is given to the resolution.

II.

What is the responsibility of the ES in the situation that has developed in the United States? To give instructions? Obviously not. But it has the duty of expressing an opinion on the desirability, possibility and permissibility of a fusion of the two organizations in this country. We regretfully establish that the ES has completely evaded this responsibility. We do not deny for a moment that there are many comrades in the Fourth International who are not informed, or not sufficiently informed, of the nature and extent of the differences between the WP on the one side and the SWP and other sections of the International on the other side. We remain at the disposal of these comrades and are always prepared to elucidate our position to them. However, the ES cannot claim to number itself among these comrades any more than the leadership of the SWP can make this claim.

For six years the leadership of the SWP has attacked our point of view on controversial questions, as is its full right, in innumerable articles in the press and speeches from the platform. Is it possible to assume that these attacks upon our position were made by the SWP without a clear and adequate knowledge of

what our position is? Is it not perfectly clear to all comrades that these attacks could not have been made without their author having a clear idea of "just what degree of agreement actually exists between the two organizations" (to quote from the resolution of the ES) as well as just what degree of disagreement exists between us.

We repeat that undoubtedly there are many comrades in the International who require another discussion between the SWP and the WP before they can express an opinion on the question of unity. But what will such a discussion bring to the SWP leadership or, for that matter, to our Workers Party that both of us do not already know? That is the question. Is the ES unable to express an opinion on the question of unity in the United States because *it*, the ES, does not know "just what degree of agreement actually exists between the two organizations," because *it* does not know just what the nature and extent of the differences are? Under no circumstances can we make this assumption. In its own resolution of January 1946 the "ES takes note of the fact that * * * the WP has been consolidated on such political positions as the question of the USSR, the defense of China and India, the national question in Europe, the existence and role of the Fourth International during the war, as well as the conception of the internal régime and of the functioning of the revolutionary party * * *." We must therefore assume that the ES too knows what our position is on the questions in dispute. Yet it evades its responsibility in expressing an opinion on whether or not, given the differences that are known to all of the leading comrades, these are compatible with membership in a united section of the Fourth International. Before it can express an opinion on this fundamental question, the ES requires another discussion of our point of view. Toward what end? In order to find out what our point of view is? But it already knows our point of view. What is supposed to be added to the knowledge and information of the European Secretariat by a further discussion? We emphasize again and again that we welcome such a discussion and shall participate in it fully but in such a discussion we will only be able to repeat what we have been saying for the past few years; we will only be able to state once more those positions with which the ES, like the leadership of the SWP, is sufficiently acquainted. More than that we shall be unable to contribute to the discussion; more than that the SWP will be unable to contribute to the discussion.

The resolution of the ES is an inexcusable evasion of responsibility. Consciously, or not, it is a diplomatic document written about a question where diplomacy is entirely out of place.

III.

Our conception of the basis for unity has been stated by us so often that it requires no elaborate restatement here. We stand

upon the foundation of the principles of revolutionary Marxism and the program of the Fourth International. On those questions where there are differences between us, we hold firmly to the view that our position, no less than that of the SWP, is compatible with membership in a united revolutionary party and international. We do not demand as a pre-condition for unity that the SWP or the International adopt our position on the Russian question, for example, no more than we would accede to any ultimatum that we abandon our position on the Russian question. To approach the problem of unity in the United States on the basis that complete theoretical and political agreement on all questions is the pre-condition of unity is to give privileged rights to the Zinovievist conception of a monolithic party and a monolithic international. That conception, carried to its conclusion by Stalinism helped destroy the Communist International. We want to resist even the slightest sign of such a conception in the Fourth International. If that is not the conception of the ES and of the other leading comrades of the International—and we prefer to believe that it is not—the resolution of the ES has no meaning. A discussion of those differences that do exist would take place best in the ranks of a united party and in a normal manner in accordance with the practices of democratic centralism.

If the public opinion of the International, which is aware of our political position and our political differences, does not express itself in favor of unification in the United States, the only conclusion that can be drawn is that we are excluded from the Fourth International because of our differences. But if that is so in our case today, it will inevitably be so in the case of other comrades and other groups tomorrow. If we are not *included* in the International because of our views, the others, tomorrow, will be excluded from the International for their views. If a clear-cut position is not taken with regard to our proposal for unity in the United States today, there is nothing to prevent the exclusion from the International of the IKD, for example, tomorrow—the IKD which has already been excluded *de facto* by the leadership of the SWP. What applies to the IKD tomorrow may very well apply to other groups the day after—the Spanish group lead by Comrade Munis, the minority in the French party, the minority in the Belgium party, etc.

We ask every comrade of the Fourth International to give the greatest attention and weight to this question:

For years the International Left Opposition, led by Comrade Trotsky, repeatedly demanded of the leadership of the Stalinists that the Trotskyist tendency and movement be restored to full membership and rights in the international. This demand was not a demagogical appeal. It corresponded to our fundamental conception of the party. It was made continuously, up to 1933. In those days we denounced mercilessly the refusal of the leadership

of the international to heed the appeal of the International Left Opposition.

You know the deep theoretical and political differences that divided our movement from the leadership of the Stalintern up to 1933. You know also the differences that divide us from the SWP and from other sections of the Fourth International. We ask every comrade to answer this question: Are the differences that separate the WP and the SWP, both of which stand upon the basic principles of Marxism and the Fourth International, greater than or even as great as, the differences that divided Trotskyism and Stalinism up to 1933. Do you consider that there was a greater possibility of justification for being in the same united party of the Stalinists of those days than there is today, for the two tendencies represented by the WP and the SWP being in the same united party of the Fourth International?

These, comrades, are the real questions that are posed before you. There should be no delay in answering them. A false answer can have only disastrous effects for the future of our International.

IV.

We wish in this appeal to you to deal with only one more point. We understand that some comrades have been led to conclude that our proposal for unity with the SWP is only a "maneuver." Let those comrades understand fully just what our "maneuver" has been. From the very beginning of the discussion with the SWP on this question, we offered to acknowledge that they would have the majority of the leadership of the united party; to acknowledge that they would have control of the party press and of all the public activities of the party; to acknowledge that, given our democratic rights inside the united party, we would be bound by party discipline in all public activities. We offered to dissolve our party; to give up our independent newspaper, theoretical review and public activities; to give up all independent public activities in the class struggle. We demanded at first only an educational *internal* bulletin of our own tendency inside of the united party. Upon the urging of the Minority of the SWP which has also sought to remove all obstacles to the unity, real or imaginary, we abandoned even this demand and confined ourselves to proposing a mutual recognition only of the *right* of a minority to issue such a bulletin for internal use in the party. This is what our "maneuver" has consisted of. We venture to say that *never* in the history of our movement has a group been prepared to make so many concessions, and concessions of such a nature, for the purpose of achieving unity with another group. If our proposals were nothing but a "maneuver," all that the SWP had to do to explode it was to say: "We accept these conditions and we are for the unification!" If we were engaged only in a maneuver, and if the SWP leadership were in any way serious about the unification we would thereby stand exposed as completely discredited people. But what

has actually been discredited is the unworthy maneuvering and the unworthy diplomacy of the leadership of the SWP.

We reiterate to you our request for affiliation made in our preceding letter to the International Pre-Conference. We reiterate to you our proposal for the unification of the movement on the basis we have indicated. The accomplishment of the unification requires, among other things, the rejection of the resolution of the European Secretariat. It requires the adoption by the International Pre-Conference and by all the sections of a resolution which will serve to bring to bear the public opinion of the International upon the leadership and membership of the SWP in the United States in such a manner as will really promote the movement for unity here and the establishment of a powerful section of the Fourth International.

With best party greetings,
POLITICAL COMMITTEE,
WORKERS PARTY.
Max Shachtman,
National Secretary.

APPENDIX P

Questionnaire to the Workers Party

National Committee
Workers Party, U. S.

Dear Comrades:

As instructed by the PC of the SWP, we are communicating to you herewith a series of motions adopted by the last meeting of the PC with reference to the organization of the discussion of questions in dispute between the SWP and the WP, in connection with the proposal for the fusion of the two organizations.

We believe these motions are self-explanatory, but if any points seem to you unclear, we stand ready to furnish the necessary explanations either in writing or in oral discussion between our respective sub-committees.

Fraternally yours,
FARRELL DOBBS,
For the Secretariat.

April 10, 1946.

APPENDIX Q

SWP-WP DISCUSSION

Motions Adopted by the Political Committee of the SWP, April 9, 1946.

Motion One: The PC is of the opinion that important differences exist between the SWP and the WP on the following questions, and that a discussion and clarification of these differences are a necessary precondition for a definitive decision by the next party convention on the question of unification of the two organizations.

- (1) Evaluation of the split of 1940 and its causes.
- (2) Marxist principles and method. The necessity of an aggressive, uncompromising struggle against revisionists of Marxism in every field, including the field of philosophy. The impermissibility of blocs with anti-Marxists against Marxists.
- (3) Attitude toward the Fourth International since the split of 1940:
 - (a) The Emergency Conference of 1940.
 - (b) The existence and functioning of the Fourth International since 1940.
 - (c) The resolutions and decisions of the International Conference of April, 1946.
- (4) The Russian question.
- (5) European perspectives and policy. (The resolution of the International Conference of April, 1946—the position of the AK of the IKD: “Three Theses,” “Socialism or Barbarism.”)
- (6) The national and colonial questions. (India-China during the war.)
- (7) Evaluation of the Stalinist parties and workers’ organizations under their leadership and control in capitalist countries, and our tactical attitude toward them.
- (8) Tactics in the American Labor Movement.
 - (a) The labor party question in the United States.
 - (b) Methods of organizing the fight against native fascism in the U. S.
 - (c) Trade union tactics and methods.
- (9) Evaluation of the YPSL and attitude toward it.
- (10) Proletarian military policy.
- (11) Conception of the party.

* * *

Motion Two: The Secretariat is instructed to draw up a summary statement of our position on these disputed questions for publication in our Internal Bulletin.

* * *

Motion Three: The Secretariat is instructed to submit to the National Committee of the Workers Party the above list of questions which in our opinion are in dispute between our party and the WP, as a program for discussion between the two parties, expressing our readiness at the same time to add any other questions which in their opinion should be included; and if they so desire, the Secretariat will meet with a corresponding sub-committee of their organization to elaborate the program of questions for the discussion.

* * *

Motion Four: The Secretariat is instructed to invite the National Committee of the Workers Party to prepare and submit a summary statement of their point of view on the questions in dispute between the two organizations, preferably in a single document of five to ten thousand words. This document, when received, is to be published in our Internal Bulletin for the information of the party members, in the pre-convention discussion on the question of unification.

APPENDIX R

Answer by the Political Committee of the Workers Party

National Committee
Socialist Workers Party
Dear Comrades:

I have been directed by the Political Committee of our party to send you the following reply to your communication of April 10th, in which you include motions on the SWP-WP discussion adopted by the Political Committee of the Socialist Workers Party on April 9th.

Motion Four adopted by your Committee instructs your Secretariat to invite our National Committee “to prepare and submit a summary statement of their point of view on the questions in dispute between the two organizations, preferably in a single document of five to ten thousand words.” Motion One adopted by your Committee lists eleven questions on which your Committee “is of the opinion that important differences exist between the SWP and the WP.”

We assume that a summary statement of our position on these eleven questions is intended primarily for the information of the membership of the SWP. The fact that the leading committee of the SWP is of the opinion that there are differences between the two parties on these eleven points presupposes that your party leadership is sufficiently acquainted with our position on the basis of official resolutions and documents of our party and of our articles that have appeared in our press. That being the case, it seems to us impossible to set forth our position on these eleven

points, which embrace some of the most important questions of theory and policy in the revolutionary Marxist movement, in the space of five or ten thousand words which have been assigned for this purpose. On some of the points you list, our party has written a considerable body of literature which could not be compressed within so tiny a space without either being entirely inadequate for your purpose or without lending itself to involuntary misconception. In either case, the purpose of discussion and clarification of the differences which you consider a necessary precondition for a definitive decision by your next party convention on the question of unification, would not be served. Consequently, all we can do in this letter is to indicate our position on your numbered questions and to add references to those documentary materials in which our point of view is adequately set forth.

* * *

1. Our party has no official document in which the split of 1940 and its causes are evaluated. However, the prevailing opinion in our party is that under the concrete circumstances of the time, our position and conduct were, by and large, correct and that of our opponents, the majority of the SWP, incorrect. Having said this, it must be added that we consider it of far greater and more urgent importance to discuss and achieve the unification of the Trotskyist movement in the United States today than to debate the question, however important in itself, of the split in 1940. The latter cannot fruitfully be substituted for the former in the present case, any more than in similar cases in the history of the revolutionary movement. We do not consider a difference of opinion in evaluating the 1940 split to be a barrier to overlooking the split by unification of the two parties today.

2. Our party is as firmly committed to the principles and methods of Marxism as it is opposed to the revision of Marxism in the sense in which the term "revisionism" has been classically employed in the Marxian movement. This is clearly set forth in the "Founding Principles of the Workers Party" adopted by the founding convention of the Workers Party in 1940, a copy of which is appended to this letter. In view of the fact that you make no specific reference to any "blocs with anti-Marxists against Marxists," we can deal with this question only by the equally general statement that, as Marxists, we do not consider blocs with anti-Marxists, such as the Stalinists, against other Marxists to be permissible or in any way consonant with revolutionary Marxism.

We do not understand why special reference is made to the necessity for an aggressive and uncompromising struggle against revisionists of Marxism in the field of philosophy particularly. Insofar as the dialectical materialism of Marxism is reflected in the fundamental program and politics of Marxism, we consider our program and policies to be solidly founded in Marxian theory. However, neither the fundamental program on which we stand nor the "Founding Principles of the Workers Party" adopted by

our founding convention deals specifically with Marxist philosophy and it does not make it directly a programmatic question. So far as we know, the same holds true of the fundamental program and declaration of principles of the SWP. We know of no proposal to make the philosophy of Marxism a specific part of the program of the Marxist party.

3. (a) Our attitude toward the Emergency Conference of 1940 was expressed in the communication we addressed to it asking that our representatives be invited for the purpose of stating our point of view on the split in the SWP, and is therefore part of the record of that Conference. The Conference not only failed to invite representatives of our party but even members of our party who were duly elected as members of the Executive Committee of the Fourth International at the international founding conference in 1938. Neither our party nor the members of the Executive Committee referred to were afforded the opportunity to participate in the preparations of this conference or in its deliberations. Consequently, we refused to recognize either the validity or the correctness of the decisions adopted by this conference on the split in the SWP. With regard to the political decisions taken by the conference, as set forth in the manifesto on the imperialist war adopted by it, we were and remain in accord with it insofar as it corresponds to the point of view of our party.

(b) While recognizing the unprecedented difficulties which faced an international like ours in the performance of its tasks since 1940, that is, during the war, we nevertheless believe that it failed, both organizationally and politically, to discharge the duties devolving upon it. The final dissolution of the International Secretariat established at the Emergency Conference of 1940 was only one of the proofs of this. Here again, there is no official document of our party on the subject and we know of none by the SWP. Our views, generally speaking, have been set forth unofficially in recent articles in our theoretical press.

(c) The resolutions and decisions of the International Conference of 1946 which we consider of first importance, namely, the resolutions on the world situation and the resolution on the IKD, have been dealt with in corresponding documents of our party. Our position on the world situation was set forth first in our resolution on the national and colonial question in Europe and Asia, adopted at our party convention in February, 1944. Our position on the world situation today and the tasks of the revolutionary Marxists is contained in a draft resolution adopted by our National Committee for submission to our coming national convention. It also contains the necessary references to the decision of the International Conference on the IKD. We are appending both of these documents to this letter. Our position on the decision taken by the International Secretariat on the question of unity in the United States is contained in the letters sent by our party to the International Conference before it adopted its deci-

sion. This document too is appended. The decisions of the Conference have in no way altered the repeatedly stated position of our party in favor of unity with the SWP.

4. We do not consider Russia a workers' state in any sense whatsoever. We consider it a reactionary social order which we characterize as bureaucratic-collectivism. We are against the defense of the Stalinist state. More than this it is impossible to set forth in a few words. We therefore refer you to such well elaborated and detailed presentations of our viewpoint as are contained in the resolution on the Russian question adopted at our 1941 convention and to that section of our resolution on the international situation, drafted by the National Committee for our coming convention, which deals with the Russian question and brings our position up to date in the light of the recent social and political developments. Both of these resolutions are appended.

5. For our position on European perspectives and policy, we refer you again to our draft resolution on the international situation which is appended, as well as to our resolution on the national question in Europe adopted by our 1944 convention. Insofar as our party has taken an official position on the resolution of the International Conference of 1946 and on the views of the IKD they are contained in these two resolutions. Our National Committee and many of the branches of the party have held several discussions of the viewpoint of our German comrades as set forth in the "Three Theses" and in "Socialism or Capitalist Barbarism." A continuation of this discussion is even now going on in the pages of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL. Our party has not, however, adopted an official position with respect to either of these two documents as such, except insofar as the *political line* of the document "Socialism or Capitalist Barbarism" is dealt with in the introduction to the document written by the Editorial Board of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL and approved by our Political Committee as a statement of its views. This introduction is appended for the information of your members. We do not know of any document which gives the official analysis and position of the SWP on the theoretical and political views of our German comrades.

6. Our position on the national and colonial question is the traditional position of Lenin. We are for the support of all nationally oppressed countries, colonial and semi-colonial countries in particular, in the struggle against imperialists. At the same time we are opposed to supporting any country which is an integral part of any imperialist camp which is at war with another imperialist camp, again in accordance with the traditional position of Lenin and Trotsky. Our position on India and China in the second world war is set forth, in conformity with these fundamental principles, in the resolution on this question adopted by our convention in 1944. It is appended herewith.

7. The National Committee resolution on the international sit-

uation contains a section which gives its analysis of the character and role of the Stalinist parties in the capitalist countries and our attitude toward them. It is appended herewith. This is not yet the official position of our party but it has been submitted for adoption by our national convention.

8. (a) Our party is in favor of and conducts a continuous agitation for the formation of an independent labor party in this country, based on the trade unions. Our detailed position on this question is contained in the resolution on the labor party adopted by our national convention in 1944. This is appended herewith.

(b) As is traditional in our movement, we favor the mobilization of the widest sections of the organized working class in the united front struggle against fascism. The failure at any given moment to achieve such a mobilization of the working class and its mass organizations does not exclude the utilization by the revolutionary vanguard of every possibility of demonstrating against fascists and fascist demonstrations. The failure of the SWP to accept the invitation of the WP to organize joint demonstrations against fascists like G. L. K. Smith at a time when the mobilization of wide masses against Smith was a practical impossibility, reveals in our opinion either political short-sightedness or an inadequate understanding of our tasks in the struggle against fascism, or both. Our views on this question are more amply developed in a pamphlet on the subject written by a member of our National Committee, Comrade Hal Draper, and approved by the Political Committee.

(c) It is impossible to go into any detail in reply to so general a question as "trade union tactics and methods," except to refer you to the resolution on the trade union question adopted by our last convention and appended herewith. As can easily be seen, this resolution conforms both to the traditional position of the revolutionary Marxists and to the objective situation in the American union movement.

9. Our evaluation of the YPSL differs in no respect from our evaluation of any similar half-reformist half-centrist movement. A sympathetic attitude, especially to those Socialist youth who are striving, however hesitantly or confusedly, toward a revolutionary Marxist position, is clearly indicated. That is what we sought to express in the open letter of our party to the Detroit convention of the YPSL in 1945, a copy of which is appended.

10. Our position on military policy is represented by our uncompromising opposition to imperialist wars and our support of all progressive wars, particularly those of the working class against the bourgeois and of nationally oppressed peoples against their imperialist oppressors. We are opposed to capitalist militarism in all its forms, including capitalist conscription. Unlike the pacifists, with whom we have nothing in common, we are for the promotion of workers' defense guards and a workers' militia, as set forth in the program of the Fourth International. While our

party has no official document on the position taken by the SWP on conscription, it is our view, as set forth in polemical articles in our press, that this position was wrong and that many of the arguments and much of the propaganda made for it in your press was both wrong and dangerous. An unofficial polemical article written by Max Shachtman in the January, 1941, issue of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL is available in the bound volume for that year.

11. Our conception of the nature and purpose, the structure and principles of the revolutionary party is familiar to all Marxists and is restated by us in the "Founding Principles of the Workers Party" and in our communications to you on the question of the unity of the WP and the SWP.

* * *

It goes without saying that we welcome any discussion between the WP and the SWP on all questions in dispute. We reiterate our point of view that a decision on unity can be adopted by the SWP, as it has already been adopted by our party, on the basis of the more than ample knowledge which both parties have of each other's political positions. Not only the leadership but also the membership of the WP is sufficiently acquainted with the differences between the two organizations and with the positions taken on the points in dispute by both organizations to endorse the proposal for unification. If it is held that the membership of the SWP is unacquainted with the nature of these differences, the documents we have submitted should suffice not only to inform your membership but to convince them that comrades holding divergent views on these questions can co-exist in a democratic revolutionary Marxist party. However, inasmuch as it cannot be maintained that the leadership of the SWP is unacquainted with the position of the Workers Party on the questions in dispute, it seems to us that it is its obligation, as a party leadership, to take a position on the question of unity and to recommend it to the membership.

Inasmuch as our party considers itself sufficiently acquainted with the political views of the SWP to adopt a position in favor of unification, which it has done, we find no necessity to add any other questions to those you have already listed. If you, for your part, find it necessary or advisable to submit a statement of any length on your position on the questions in dispute and on the question of unity, we are prepared, it goes without saying, to acquaint our membership with it immediately. If you find it necessary to ask us any specific questions on specific aspects of our theoretical or political positions which are not answered by the documents appended to this letter, we are ready to comply with your request for further information.

As for the general matter of clarification of the differences in the ranks of the organization, it is our view that the best and most fruitful way to proceed, if you consider a discussion an indis-

pensable preliminary to a decision on the question of unity, is by means of a discussion *bulletin* jointly edited and published by the two parties and by joint meetings of the membership of the two parties. We make this proposal for a joint bulletin and joint membership discussion meetings precisely as one of the steps that would facilitate and accelerate the unification of the two parties into one and as the best means for a planned and regulated discussion of systematically counterposed views.

It is important, in conclusion, to emphasize that none of the views or proposals set down above are viewed by us as contradicting or substituting for the views and proposals on unification set forth by our party in its communications sent to you and to the International Executive Committee.

Fraternally yours,
MAX SHACHTMAN,
National Secretary
For the Political Committee.

April 30, 1946.

tions of their own, and sometimes even to irresponsible actions which hurt and discredit the opposition, hurt the party and only make the consolidation and self-justification of the bureaucracy easier.

In the very early days of the struggle between the opposition and the bureaucracy in Russia (Trotsky points out), the party leadership, in order artificially to deepen and extend the differences, dug into the historical past of the Russian movement for all sorts of half-relevant and utterly irrelevant arguments. To clothe themselves with the authority of Lenin in the struggle against Trotsky, the bureaucracy, in part out of deliberate disloyalty, in part out of simple lack of understanding of Lenin's views, raised for the first time the theory of "socialism in a single country." It is perfectly clear that this theory was put forward in the first place solely as a disloyal factional weapon against the opposition. But what was initially invented as an instrument of the bureaucracy eventually transformed the bureaucracy into its instrument, so to speak. The bureaucracy became victim of its own factional excesses. The bureaucracy sought artificially to deepen the gulf between itself and the opposition and ended by falling into the gulf itself. The theory of "socialism in a single country" became practice. In practice, a more natural realignment took place. On the one side, at one stage or another, stood those who sought to preserve the achievements of the socialist revolution. To the other side, were driven all those whom powerful social forces, making this theory their very own, propelled toward the destruction of the achievements of the socialist revolution. Stalin, and the circle around him in 1924, thought that putting forward the theory of "Socialism in a single country" would be an effective factional bludgeon with which to smash Trotsky. It is inconceivable, however, that in 1924 this circle could even dream of the distance from socialism, that they were destined to travel under the impulsion of the theory they had themselves invented and of the social forces awakened and mobilized by this theory.

In the long run, organization, any system of organization or administration, does not have and cannot have any independent significance. Politics exists to serve class interests. Organizations exist to serve politics. Organization of a certain type is required for politics of a certain type. If it does not meet these requirements, one or the other must, and in the end surely will, be "adjusted" so that the two conform. In the end, the political line decides everything.

The possibility of unity between the Workers Party and the Socialist Workers Party was reopened for the first time since the beginning of the Second World War, at least so far as the Workers Party was concerned, by the official decision of the Socialist Workers Party that the slogan of "unconditional defense of the Soviet Union" was to be taken from the foreground

position which it occupied in the SWP's political life and retired to the background; that it would be replaced by the slogan "Defend the European revolution from Stalinism." The principal political difference that caused the split in 1940 having been the question of defense of Stalinist Russia in the war, the Socialist Workers Party Minority and then the Workers Party itself took the view that with this change in the position of the SWP, unity was once more desirable and possible. It is not necessary to dwell on this. The conclusion is obvious and incontestable.

But it is precisely at this point that the bureaucratic character of the régime and leadership in the Socialist Workers Party played its fatal part. To prevent unity, to show that unity was "politically" impossible or undesirable, the Socialist Workers Party bureaucracy had to exaggerate and extend and even invent political differences. That is the only meaning of the classic bureaucratic formula, not coined but adopted by the leader of the Socialist Workers Party: "We, on our part, assume that the course toward deepening the split is necessary and correct; our attitude flows from that." It is simply impossible to so much as begin to understand what happened to the struggle for unity if the full meaning of this formula, first uttered in April 1945 (see Appendix), is not grasped in all its implications. To avoid unity, the Cannonites took the course of "deepening the split."

The slogan of "defense of the Soviet Union," which they had at first decided had "receded into the background," was forcibly dragged into the foreground, given the same, if not greater, prominence and emphasis than it had before. Typical of the bureaucratic procedure, the second change was made without even so much as an acknowledgment of the first and, it goes without saying, without consulting the party membership or even the official party leadership. The second change came as a purely personal pronouncement by the party leader, as a revelation from high authority, as a proclamation from the throne, in the form of a speech delivered at a public meeting in which the slogan was once more—on purely personal initiative and authority, it should be emphasized, and without the slightest consultation or authorization from the party itself—hailed into the foreground for the ingenious reason that... the Second World War is still going on. To this it should be added that the first change, namely, retiring the slogan to the background, was made while the war was really on; while the second change, namely, shifting the slogan back to the foreground, was made months after the defeat of Germany and Japan!

Since that time, the "Russian line" of the Socialist Workers Party has been "fortified" in the same direction and with the same aim of "deepening the split." But even if on a smaller scale, nevertheless in essentially the same way, that which was so cleverly contrived as a factional instrument is necessarily acquir-